

KOLB'S THEORY OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING COMPARED WITH  
THE PERCEIVED NEEDS OF REENTRY STUDENTS AT  
LARGE PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

By

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To my children,  
Rebecca and Rachel,  
for the precious time lost to  
complete this dissertation.

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School  
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by

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Population changes in the United States as the baby boom cohort reaches middle age are beginning to affect institutions of higher education. There are both fewer traditional age students available and more older students seeking reentry to colleges. Societal changes affecting occupational choice, the rate of change, and financial stability are also providing impetus for individuals to reenter colleges at an increasing rate.

The educational needs of older individuals are different from those of traditional age students because the latter have increased life experience that affects their learning. Consequently, Kolb suggests that reentry students will approach higher education with different expectations and needs. He theorized that to serve them adequately, an institution must provide what he described as an integrated learning experience.

This study surveyed undergraduates at the University of Florida and the University of Georgia who are 25 years of

age or older, as well as administrators at the same institutions. The data were gathered by telephone interview using open-ended questions that addressed themes identified by Kolb: Structure of the Institution, Mission and Philosophy of Education, Alternative Learning Environments, Selection and Evaluation of Students and Faculty, Social Networks outside of Class, and Campus Atmosphere. The data from reentry students and administrators were compared with the needs of reentry students as outlined by Kolb.

Kolb's theory of experiential learning offers a direction for institutional planning and can be used as a general series of guidelines. However, reentry students differ from Kolb's theorized needs in that they place more emphasis on the relationship between their learning experiences in the classroom and their future role as a professional. Also, in contrast to Kolb, they place less emphasis on social contacts with traditional age students as a method of integrating into the institution.

Administrators, through the services and programs offered at their institutions, are less sensitive to the needs of reentry students than would be suggested by Kolb's theorized needs. Subsequently, they rely on reentry students adjusting to available programs and services, and individual faculty and staff providing personal support.

The needs of reentry students have unique characteristics that dictate specific responses. To begin to meet adequately the needs of reentry students at large

public universities, institutions should provide the following: a centralized office to coordinate services for reentry students, specialized orientation, a flexible and varied schedule of courses, a reentry student social group, sensitive academic advisors, and a staff member to serve as an ombudsman for reentry concerns.

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Much has been written regarding the inevitable changes that will occur in higher education as the baby boom cohort of the 1950s and 1960s inevitably progresses through the population into middle and old age. Most significant to higher education, it has been projected that the number of 18 year olds in the population will begin to decline during the 1980s and level off by 1991 at approximately 73% of the number of 18 year olds that were potential clients in 1979. This projection envisions an average enrollment decline of 25% (Bowen, 1980), a potentially devastating blow to some institutions, particularly the small independent four year institutions that have always relied heavily on traditional age students for their support. The U.S. National Center for Education Statistics reports that the actual enrollment of students 18 to 24 years of age in institutions of higher education in 1980 was 7.3 million. The projection for enrollment of this same age group in 1990 is 6.2 million (as cited in United States Bureau of the Census, 1983). This difference is also evident in terms of changes in the size of the age cohort of 18 to 24 year olds. In 1982 this cohort was estimated to be 30.3 million or 13.1% of the total U.S. population. However, the projections for the year 2000 are for this cohort to number only 24.4 million or

9.2% of the total population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1984b). Since 1981 however, college enrollment has not changed significantly due to increases in nontraditional students entering universities and colleges. In the years since 1981, 36% of the enrollment nationwide has been made up of those 25 years of age and older. This group comprised only 28% of college enrollment in 1972 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1985b). As this portion of the population continues inevitably to increase in size over the next 50 years, there will be added pressures on educational institutions and society in general to respond to these changes to the basic demography of the United States.

The population trends, alone, are indicative of the potential problem that could gradually change the clientele of higher education and ultimately confront educators directly with the reality of larger numbers of older adults, over age 55, asking to be served. Issues that will change the make-up of our society in rather dramatic fashion include the longer life expectancies occurring in the U.S. population, the coming "Senior Boom" (by the year 2030, 20% of the U.S. population will be 65 years of age or older), the availability of earlier retirement for men and women, and the projection that there will be more retirees in relation to the number of active workers with this ratio reaching 1 to 3 by the year 2030 (Sheppard, 1980).

Influences envisioned by Long (1983, p. 31) will either provide a crushing blow to higher education if it fails to

respond to changes in the traditional college student population or clues as to a new direction toward which our institutions should focus their resources. Changing age profiles, rising educational levels, growing concern about equity and the rights of special populations, changing attitudes towards work, career change, professional and occupational obsolescence, mandatory continuing education, increasing acceptance of nontraditional approaches to education, and the expansion of education are the social developments that he feels will have the most significant impact on higher education. If, as a result of these social developments, the vacant seats predicted in college classrooms are not filled by the inevitable older population, shortsighted institutions that do not attract this age group may be forced to close their doors. Conversely, these changes could generate the opportunity to provide lifelong learning to the entire population, a goal that has been envisioned for this nation since the Chautauqua movement began in the mid-19th century.

Graney (1980) found that

among older people, the "young-old," better educated, urban, healthy, financially secure, and generally active people with youthful self concepts were more likely than others to be enrolled in further educational endeavors. (p. 85)

It appears that the United States, as a result of its universal educational system, is presently developing a sizable cohort of well educated, urban, healthy individuals who will eventually become the "young-old" that Graney has

written about. By the year 2000, 64% of the 65 years of age and over will be high school graduates while 80% of the entire population will be graduates (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1984a). In a 1981 study by Ahlburg, Crummims, and Easterlin (as cited in U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1985b) they projected that enrollment of 18 to 24 year olds in higher education would increase if parental income increased. If this becomes reality, the increase or stabilization in the number of 18 to 24 year olds enrolled in college coupled with the demands of a well educated older population seeking lifelong learning and retraining for new careers could produce previously unseen pressures on institutions of higher education. The crucial issue is ultimately not how many 18 to 24 year olds attend college but that as this cohort of the baby boom enters middle and old age, the individuals who comprise it will make ever increasing demands on higher education as they seek lifelong learning experience for personal and professional pursuits. Of course a new type of institution for higher education could become a viable alternative to colleges and universities if there is no legitimate effort by them to meet the needs of this cohort. Work place training and development is already roughly equivalent to the entire elementary, secondary, and higher education system in amount of dollars spent (Carnevale, 1986). It is unlikely that a new institution will supplant higher education as the first choice of those seeking further education given the limited

resources our society seems willing to spend on education. However, other means of postsecondary education could become more influential especially if higher education fails to meet these needs and may further dilute those limited resources available for postsecondary education. The above factors will strain present physical and human resources and force changes in the way institutions serve students across the spectrum of age and human development.

#### Diversity of Adults

Central to the problem of responding to this new population is the diversity of adults and their specific needs. This is most evident when requests for educational services are made. Hiemstra (1976a) pointed out that "a teaching and learning process for adults must be built to respond to the unique needs of those engaged in it" (p. 25) as they, in general, are independent, self-motivated, and capable of making life decisions; have a wide and varied accumulation of experience from life with varied requirements for the type and amount of education; and bring their own personal variety of problems and limitations to the educational process. Responding to these criteria provides a plethora of logistical and academic problems that institutions will have to address if they wish to be successful with this new generation of students. In an attempt to classify their uniqueness into manageable groups,

these "experienced" students have been categorized as goal-oriented, activity-oriented, and learning-oriented by Houle (1963). Hiemstra (1976a, p. 35) added self-directed learner as a fourth category to allow for those who tend to be self-reliant and autonomous in their learning. It is safe to say that most adult learners, at different times during their years of active learning, will appear in each of the four categories.

The most easily identifiable subgroups of reentry students include veterans, displaced homemakers, international students, recently divorced or widowed individuals, those pursuing career change, and dilettantes. The distinct differences in their backgrounds and lifestyles are a marked change from the students who have traditionally entered institutions of higher education. This is not to imply that traditional age students are a completely homogeneous group of subjects with little difference among them. However, the added factor that must be acknowledged when addressing reentry students is the additional time these individuals have had to diverge further from what has been seen as the norm of the traditional age student: a young, academically capable, unmarried, financially dependent individual from the middle or upper socioeconomic class. The added experience and maturity that time has provided to reentry students, as well as the interpersonal and financial obligations acquired through the years, have an impact on the manner in which they operate in the world

around them and subsequently in their approach to education when they return.

#### Reentry to Higher Education

The goal-oriented adult learner who reenters higher education is still viewed as an anomaly by many in higher education, students and faculty alike. However, the above data coupled with population projections previously reported by Bowen indicate that their numbers will continue to rise on our college campuses, driven by social and personal change, and modified by the demographics of our population. Situational, institutional, and dispositional barriers to reentry students (Cross, 1981, p. 98) will continue to steer students towards or away from particular institutions based on their relative magnitude as perceived by the potential student. These barriers will function as obstacles to individuals not to the entire cohort.

Colleges and universities must begin to face openly the issue of change in the status quo and recognize that the adult learner is showing signs of interest in higher education in significant numbers. At present, little is done by most institutions to attract adult learners as reentry students. There are examples in which severe financial constraints have forced recruitment of these individuals to ensure the survival of the institution. Rarer still are those whose mission statements give credence

to reentry students as a legitimate target to attract and serve. This is not due to a lack of expertise in recruitment skills or sensitivity to the issue. A study focusing on directors of admissions has shown that they have extensive knowledge of the ways to serve older students' needs and have a willingness to do so. However, few have applied these skills to recruitment of this population (Fauquet, 1983).

As a result of societal influences the adult learner is being guided, albeit in many cases reluctantly, toward becoming a reentry student, and is being offered a narrow selection of institutions from which to choose. Community colleges, while perceived by most students as being a convenient and non-threatening environment, do not offer the curricular depth of a college or university. On the other hand, colleges and universities, unless designed specifically for older students, have tended to view these students as an inconvenience (Peterson, 1979). Subsequently, from the perspective of the adult learner as reentry student, the problem manifests itself in their attempts to select the best learning environment available from limited choice. The role of the institution becomes one of providing appropriate and adequate services to reentry students based on their academic and developmental needs. Identifying those needs, providing the appropriate programs and services, and communicating their existence to potential reentry students will be critical to the success

of institutions of higher education and the students they serve.

#### Developmental Tasks and Learning

Reentry students, by virtue of the developmental tasks with which they are struggling at their various ages, approach higher education from a perspective apart from traditional students. The latter are in a beginning, specialized search for identity, while reentry students are involved in personal maintenance, reassessment of their present status, and a delving in depth into unresolved personal issues. The resultant interplay of these forces is an integrative approach to their own personal development that Erikson has viewed as essential for growth and mastery during the crisis of "generativity versus stagnation" (as cited in Kolb, 1981, p. 251). Kolb views this developmental task, from an educational perspective, as movement along a continuum of increasing complexity and relativism in an individual's experiences as a learner.

Kolb's model of experiential learning presents a four-stage cycle in which concrete experience becomes the basis for observation and reflection, leading to the formation of abstract concepts from which new actions evolve into new experiences (Kolb, 1981, p. 235). This model is historically linked to the work of Kurt Lewin and relies on the precept that experience is a central process in learning. The model is primarily developed as a theory to

conceptualize the cognitive learning styles of individuals by relating concrete, abstract, and active processes within an interactive model that allows for individual preferences to be recognized in the learning process. A series of interdependent stages are traversed in which an individual moves between active and reflective modes of learning. He called these stages Concrete Experience (CE), Reflective Observation (RO), Abstract Conceptualization (AC), and Active Experimentation (AE). Each stage (mode) is necessary for effective learning and when conceptualized into a model the relationship between the stages is circular in that an individual begins to learn through Concrete Experience and proceeds through the other stages in sequence until Active Experimentation brings the individual back into the stage of Concrete Experience to continue the learning cycle.

Effective learners use all four stages in the learning cycle though there are dominant or preferred styles that are developed through the life experience and socialization of each individual. These individually preferred styles will shape the manner in which people learn and the processes they utilize to learn. As the interplay of active and reflective methods of learning affects the approach individuals take when acquiring knowledge, it can guide them into or out of different academic disciplines and may ultimately affect the profession they choose to enter.

Individuals tend to gravitate to academic disciplines in which their learning style is most consistent with the

nature of the knowledge being learned and where the learning style is valued by their peers.

Experiential learning can also be applied to the broader aspects of adaptation to life such as decision making, problem solving, and life-style (Kolb, 1981, p. 248). Kolb stated in his chapter in The Modern American College (1981): "From this broader perspective, learning becomes a central life task, and how one learns becomes a major determinant of the course of personal development" (p. 248). In 1975, Kolb and Fry (as cited in Kolb, 1981) conceptualized the human growth process as three broad developmental stages of acquisition which extends from birth to adolescence, specialization which extends from adolescence through formal education or career training, and integration in which there is a reassertion and expression of the non-dominant learning styles of the individual. As these developmental stages are traversed over time, individuals begin to view the world with increased complexity and relativism. The learning modes described above are more closely connected to one another in the final personal growth stage of integration. Each learning mode is associated with a dimension of personal growth that moves on a continuum towards increased generalization and integration as an individual progresses through the growth stages described by Kolb and Fry. Concrete Experience is connected with affective complexity, RO with perceptual complexity,

AC with symbolic complexity, and AE with behavioral complexity.

The four learning modes, during the growth stage of acquisition, are relatively independent and are conceptualized into a two dimensional model as a circle. A third dimension is added to the model when experiential learning is related to personal growth. With the circle as a base representing the acquisition stage, the model rises perpendicular to the base, forming a cone. The top of the cone, where it narrows to a point, represents the increased integration and interdependency of the learning modes during the developmental stage of integration. The model indicates that the same learning processes are used by reentry students as by traditional students during all three developmental stages. Individuals begin the learning process at the base of the cone. As they develop through time, the cone narrows and the active and reflective modes become more closely associated in the learning process. A difference between traditional and reentry students is in the relationship between the modes of active and reflective learning at the various stages and this leads to different expectations of the college experience.

In providing educational opportunities for adults as reentry students, institutions of higher education can use this integrative approach to development and learning as a framework to describe adult development in the educational arena. Kolb (1981, p. 252) stated that the central function

of the university is to provide to students integrative structures and programs that counter balance the tendencies toward specialization. The degree to which an institution provides these programs will affect the learning environment significantly in that it will be more closely aligned to the developmental needs of reentry students.

Unfortunately, institutions have largely ignored these adults as being little more than activity-oriented learners and have been unresponsive and often indifferent to their needs as unique from those of traditional age students. Institutions have structured their curriculum to address the larger traditional student population's developmental need of specialization and as a result offer an academic experience that is viewed as narrow and unconnected by reentry students who are looking for integrative experiences in their formal learning. The rapid and constant change, continual march towards occupational obsolescence, and the onset of changing life styles (Hiemstra, 1976a, p. 7) are major forces that have begun to force adults to reenter formal education as goal-oriented learners. Statistics from community colleges already indicate that as of 1980, one-half of their enrollment, nationwide, was part-time (Gordon & Kappner, 1980) and 1 in 3 college students in 1981 was over 25 years of age (Magerrell, 1981). Unfortunately, these reentry students are enrolled in a curriculum that was designed for someone else and while useful in obtaining a

degree, the courses and academic programs do not meet all of their needs as adults.

Historically, institutions have been interested in attracting a relatively homogeneous group of individuals from a similar age group and formally credentialed educational background and have addressed their developmental needs accordingly. However, assumptions regarding the homogeneity and relatively young age of the typical student are no longer valid as a basis for planning and implementing programs to meet academic and extra-curricular needs. The influx of older individuals as goal-oriented students will alter the focus of the curriculum from what has been one of increasing specialization over the past 80 years, to the broader context of integration across the curriculum. The factor of time and its effects on an individual's psychological development and academic skills dramatically change the perspective of a student who "reenters" education versus one who "enters" education in the traditional manner. The resultant effect on the institution is unavoidable once the reentry population reaches a significant percentage of the student population as their demands for services will begin to modify and in some instances cause the replacement of existing programs. Their impact will ultimately be seen in the types of services offered as well as the orientation and focus of both the academic and human service programs provided by colleges and universities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to compare the theoretical needs of reentry students as identified by Kolb, with the needs as perceived by selected reentry students and university administrators at two large public universities in relation to the services and programs of the universities. In addition, the following questions were specifically addressed:

1. What are the differences between the perceived needs of reentry students at large public universities and the theoretical needs of reentry students as identified by Kolb?
2. What are the differences between the needs of reentry students as perceived by administrators at large public universities and the theoretical needs of reentry students as identified by Kolb?
3. What are the differences between what large public universities are actually doing to meet the needs of reentry students, as perceived by reentry students and administrators, and the theoretical needs of reentry students as identified by Kolb?
4. What recommendations can be made for large public universities to improve the quality of learning for reentry students?

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The data for this study were collected from administrative officers and reentry students at two large public universities using telephone interviews to survey the individuals at each institution. The following were used to delimit the study:

1. The arbitrary dividing line of those 25 years of age and over was used to delineate reentry students from other adults in higher education. This benchmark of 25 years of age and over is an arbitrary figure as the uniqueness of reentry students is evidenced more by their reentry than their age.

2. Information in this study was collected through personal interviews of administrators in the three main areas of university administration (academic affairs, student affairs, and business affairs) and reentry students presently enrolled at each institution. The use of telephone interviews for data collection can restrict the comprehensiveness of the data as it is dependent on access to individuals who list their telephone number with the university and restrictions of time.

3. As noted, two large public universities were used in this study: the University of Florida and the University of Georgia. Both of these institutions are large land grant universities with strong research functions located at some distance from large urban areas.

4. The study was confined to addressing what Kolb identified as the institutional context at each university. Questions were formulated under the following six headings: Structure of the Institution, Mission and Philosophy of Education, Alternative Learning Environments, Selection and Evaluation of Students and Faculty, Social Networks Outside of Class, and Campus Atmosphere (Kolb, 1985, p. 205).

Definitions

Adult Learner: Individuals, 25 years of age or older, involved in either formal or informal learning for any reason.

Baccalaureate Degree Granting Institution: Public or private institutions that are authorized to grant baccalaureate degrees.

Land Grant University: An institution of higher education that was established as a result of the Morrill Act of 1862 or subsequent federal legislation connected to it.

Large Public University: An institution of higher education with a student enrollment over 10,000 that is directly associated with a state government through legislative or constitutional enactment.

Learning Environment: The network of rules pertaining to academic enrollment and student life, the availability of services and programs of an extra-curricular nature, as well

as the perceptions of the student's experiences in the classrooms and offices of the institution.

Nontraditional Student: An individual involved in some form of higher education who as a result of his or her race, age, marital status, previous educational background, sex, or economic status does not fit the traditional definition of a student.

Program: An organized activity of varying length and complexity designed to provide information and/or service to a particular population.

Reentry Student: An individual 25 years of age or older, who is presently enrolled in a full-time or part-time baccalaureate degree program and has either delayed the start of or interrupted the progress of his or her degree program for a significant period of time at some point prior to graduation.

Service: A specific response by an individual, group, or agency intended to satisfy a perceived or expressed need of another individual, group, or agency.

Traditional Student. An individual, 18 to 22 years of age, from the middle or upper socioeconomic class who has attended educational institutions generally uninterrupted since childhood.

#### Overview of Methodology

The data for this study were gathered from individual telephone interviews at two large public institutions in

Florida and Georgia. The specific steps used to complete the study were as follows:

1. A review of the related literature generated a list of identified needs of reentry students in higher education and the suggested programs and services to address those needs (Appendix C).

2. The needs of reentry students identified through the literature review were organized in the context of Kolb's theory of experiential learning. Six central themes identifying the context of higher education institutions were used to develop a series of questions that connected the needs of reentry students with Kolb's experiential learning theory and to identify individual perceptions of the needs of reentry students.

3. The questions were organized into an open ended interview format focused around the six common issues identified by Kolb.

4. Two institutions were selected for their availability and unique identities. The University of Florida and the University of Georgia are considered to be traditional universities in smaller metropolitan areas with a known history of serving traditional age students. Both of these institutions are land grant universities and subsequently older institutions with a statewide mission and a strong commitment to research as part of their state and national image. Located in two different states, the

institutions were chosen in order to avoid reactions limited by state system procedures.

5. Five university administrators were contacted at each institution and interviewed over the telephone. An attempt was made to have representation at each institution from business affairs, academic affairs, and student affairs.

6. An open ended interview was used to gather data using the survey developed above. The data were recorded through the use of hand written notes during each interview.

7. With the assistance of the administrators at each institution, 50 reentry students at each institution were contacted in writing to take part in the study. They were selected at random from a list supplied by the university. Twenty individuals from this sample of 50 were interviewed by telephone in the same manner as the university administrators.

8. The data were organized into groupings consistent with the samples to facilitate comparison between individual respondents, groups, and institutions.

9. The data were subsequently organized around consistent themes that were expressed by the respondents with attention given to the differences between administrators' responses and students' responses.

10. The needs of reentry students were identified as perceived by the administrators and students, respectively, at each institution.

11. The responses from each institution were evaluated in relation to Kolb's theory of experiential learning to determine if the administrators at these institutions of higher education were offering integrated learning experiences to reentry students, and whether, as stated in Kolb's theory, the reentry students enrolled at these institutions were expressing the need for integrated learning experiences in the institution's services and programs.

12. The data were reported and discussed in Chapter IV of this study with an analysis and recommendations for serving reentry students at large public universities presented in Chapter V.

#### Outline of the Dissertation

Chapter I has provided an overview of the problem regarding the adult learner as reentry student in institutions of higher education. The relationship between these students and the learning environment of the institution is viewed as a critical factor in their success.

Chapter II is a review of the literature as it pertains to reentry students and their relationship to institutions of higher education. There are three foci: reentry students in higher education, the developmental tasks that influence this population, and the academic and human service needs of reentry students in higher education.

Chapter III describes the methodology of the study, including the selection of the sample, the instrument used, and data collection techniques.

Chapters IV and V provide a discussion of the findings and a summary of the study with conclusions and recommendations, respectively.

## CHAPTER II REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter will focus on three areas of concern in responding to adults as reentry students. The first area will address adult development and its relationship with reentry to higher education. It will be followed by a discussion of the identified needs of adults as reentry students and the chapter will conclude with a review of the academic concerns and needs that must be resolved to support learning for adults in higher education.

### Adult Development and Reentry

Traditionally, institutions of higher education have viewed students as a rather homogeneous group of 18 to 22 year olds whose education has been constant since high school (Prager, 1983). However, it is nearly impossible to generalize about adults as reentry students, due to their various ages, educational backgrounds, and socioeconomic levels (Hiemstra, 1976a, p. 32). It is helpful then, when trying to gain an understanding of who these students are, to look at adults through the writings of adult development theorists.

### Developmental Theories

Levinson (1978, p. 35) grouped adults into three broad age related stages of Early Adulthood (17-40), Middle Adulthood (40-60), and Late Adulthood (60-onward), with each stage preceded by an unsettling transition period. Individuals will progress through each stage due to their physical age and be confronted with the issues of each stage. Levinson's analogy of a person's life as seasons that they must live through gives a representation that there is an inevitability in a person's progress through these stages. Erickson, on the other hand, viewed adults through a psychosocial model and described four less distinct periods that occur after the basic issue of adolescence centering around identity formation is resolved. He stated that adults move through stages focusing on outward orientation, developing relationships, generativity vs. stagnation, and old age with diminished powers. All four stages are loosely tied to age but there is much more emphasis on individual divergence at different stages of growth. A major criticism of his work, however, is that his theory is based on the study of men and subsequently women are seen only in the developmental context of men (as cited in Widick, Parker, & Knefelkamp, 1978a). This theory may have questionable relevance in the field of higher education since the majority of reentry students are women. If he has misread the development of adults by this omission,

Erikson's theory must be considered incomplete when viewed in the context of higher education.

Arthur Chickering's writings in 1969 focused on the traditional age student dealing with the resolution of their identity. He broke down Erickson's stage of identity formation into seven vectors that individuals must progress through in sequence to become adults. Like Erickson, he saw these vectors as loosely tied to age allowing for individuals' growth rate to differ under various circumstances. The significance to older adults is that he was able to discern a challenge/response pattern in individuals during this time period. This has led him to theorize that development occurs when tasks are pursued that allow change (as cited in Widick, Parker, & Knefelkamp, 1978b). This challenge/response issue is important in the context of adults reentering higher education as during the time of their reentry they appear to be at one of these periods of transition that is necessary for continued development. The task of pursuing a degree at a college or university becomes a powerful force that both pushes and pulls individuals into higher stages of personal growth.

Non-age related theories built on the work of Dewey and Piaget and addressed stages of ethical, intellectual, and moral development. William Perry grouped individuals into four major areas related to the manner in which they responded to ethical issues. Dualism preceded multiplicity in that individuals progressed from a simplistic black and

white view of the world to an environment where there are multiple answers. This latter stage is followed by relativism in which individuals begin to view issues in context and relative to other issues. Ultimately, Perry theorized that it is possible to move into the final stage of commitment to relativism where diverse personal themes and commitments are used in establishing identity (as cited in King, 1978).

Kohlberg theorizes that individuals move through six universal stages focusing on the development of empathy and justice. He sees this focus as the central concept of development with the goal of having individuals move from "none" to "much" (as cited in Smith, 1978). Perry and Kohlberg view development through these stages as non-age related, so movement through them by individuals is neither uniform nor one directional. Therefore, reentry students, though older than their traditional counterparts, may still view the world in simplistic authoritarian terms with little relation to the context of a particular issue.

Loevinger, as a result of her study of women aged 10 to 30, views adult development as a series of irreversible, invariant, and hierarchical "Milestones" that are passed during one's life. Each stage builds on the previous one with some correlation between age and stage (as cited in Knefelkamp, Parker, & Widick, 1978). On the other hand, Gilligan (1982, p. 6) expressed a view that women do not fit into "Man's Life Cycle" at all and saw the focus of women's

development as one of finding maturity using the issues of interdependence and caring as the driving force. Women are seen to use an ethic of care in which the central theme is for "no one to get hurt," as opposed to an ethic of justice in which men strive to be "treated as equals."

Creamer and Akins (1981) have placed the various theories of development into four families: Kohlberg and Perry are cognitive theorists who describe human development in terms of how people think; Chickering, Erikson, Gould, Levinson, Lowenthal, Neugarten, and Sheehy are considered to be psychosocialist in their theoretical base as they describe development in terms of what is thought; Maslow and Rogers are humanistic/existential in their writing by describing individuals as moving toward self-actualization and development; and the final group of Astin, Pace, and Stern is labeled person-environment interaction where behavior is a function of the interaction of personality and environment.

The concept of a "trigger" event that causes a transition in an individual has been helpful in understanding the move towards further educational experience by adults (Carbone, 1982). There are seven trigger areas identified as career, family, leisure, art, health, religion, and citizenship with "career" being the primary reason for reentry (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980, p. 39). As adults react to these trigger events and pass through a period of transition, they will inevitably interact in

significant ways with their environment, part of which is the educational environment. Tarule and Weathersby (1979) classified these perspectives as time linked periods called life phases; the progressive structures of developmental stages and/or the characteristic preferences for certain modes of learning known simply as learning style. They are not mutually exclusive concepts and, as such, allow for significant overlap. The combination of the concepts of trigger events linked with a series of life phases is helpful in both conceptualizing and planning program responses by the various components of the institution.

Merriam (1979) reviewed the available theories of development in relation to programmatic offerings and found commonalities that can be addressed by institutions. Adults begin to have a growing awareness that one's existence is finite and the resultant period of introspection and self-analysis is critical to future growth and development. Merriam further stated that not only is it potentially the most powerful stage in terms of life interaction but it has developmental tasks that are unique. Her analysis also revealed that there was no research that supports the notion of a midlife crisis, but change is evident and there appears to be a tendency for a male-female role reversal in middle age in which men become more passive and women become more assertive.

In reviewing Havighurst's work on adult development, Merriam (1978) collapsed 10 "substantial changes" into the

four categories of family, career, physical, and psychological concerns. Using these categories, the focus of educational programs is the resolution of developmental tasks of the various age groups. Specifically, she stated that education should assist individuals in redefining and redirecting career goals, assist middle-aged women in entering or reentering the job market, assist individuals in developing new career directions, provide courses that deal with the physical and economic problems of aging parents and teenage children, and provide workshops on physical aging and sexuality.

The developmental needs of adults are easily identified and unavoidable by educational institutions as some response is required and probably demanded by the students as they progress from task to task. While it is obvious that an educational institution cannot serve all the needs of adults, the Carnegie Commission in 1973 stated that it is important to promote the successful accomplishment of major developmental tasks (Creamer & Akins, 1981). Institutions have always responded to the developmental needs of their traditional clientele so it is not beyond reason to expect them to broaden their perspective to include reentry students in the paradigm.

#### Reentry to Higher Education

A significant and early influence on adult education was the Chataqua movement which began in 1874 in upstate

New York. The theory that adults, as well as children, can learn and that education should be extended beyond the formal school years has been a driving force in causing educational institutions and community agencies to open new opportunities for adult learning (Stubblefield, 1981). Adults as students have been determined to readily acquire the values of the academic community they enter (Pirnot & Dunn, 1983) and become less like their same-age peers in the general adult population.

#### Motivation and Success

There is a strong move on the part of adults to reenter, not remain on the periphery of higher education. Morstain and Smart (1977) have developed a motivational typology of adult students to express the reasons for returning to education. They classify them as being either non-directed, social, stimulation-seeking, career-oriented, or life change in their motivation for reentry. More importantly however, they found that such a wide range existed in the demographics of each motivational typology, it is clearly misleading to group adults by the traditional methods of age, income, marital status, etc. Institutions must begin to reconceptualize the make-up of the student population as it exists today. These differing motivations for reentry will lead to broader needs and requests for services from all areas of the institution.

As adults consider a return to formal education, four goals and barriers most significantly affect their participation: career goals, self-development goals, affective barriers, and situation barriers. Understandably, situation barriers were rated highest when looking at the total population of reentry students (Apt, 1978). Access to an institution and financial and time constraints, to mention the most evident, can be insurmountable obstacles regardless of the individual's motivation level or ultimate goal. However, within the subgroups of the unskilled, skilled workers, and housewives, affective barriers, such as motivation or support from family members and peers, are rated the highest as barriers to reentry. Career goals were rated highest as a reason for participation by the 18 to 29 year olds and by those individuals who were not presently married (Apt, 1978). The assumption here is that the older the student, the less likely career development is an issue and self-development becomes the more prevalent motivational force for most individuals seeking reentry. However, this does not take into account the issue of occupational obsolescence that can occur to individuals at any time in their career.

Suchinsky (1982) divided motivational influences effecting reentry to environmentally derived problems dealing with family, personal issues and aging, and developmental problems involving the various stage related tasks of adults as careers change, children leave home, and

parents become ill or die. He states that though these students potentially bring a mature perspective to education, they provide a new set of problems to the institutions as well. These problems manifest themselves in reentry students as transitory uncertainty, strong goal orientation coupled with a sense of immediacy, muted aspirations, and a thirst for information (Flohr & Sweeney, 1982).

Outright barriers to reentry include lack of time, costs, scheduling problems, assorted institutional requirements and red tape, lack of information about appropriate opportunities, problems with child care or transportation, lack of confidence, and lack of interest (Cross, 1981, p. 98). Most significant as barriers are lack of time and lack of interest. Age, money, type of courses, availability of courses, and personal health conditions are less significant or not significant as students become older (Graney, 1980). Cross (1981a, p. 124) presented the Chain of Response model (COR) to conceptualize the process by which adults return to education and the effect of barriers on them (Appendix A). She stated that institutions that wish to encourage participation start at (E) by opening new opportunities and removing existing barriers. If this is accomplished, the institution can begin to determine the goals of adults and plan accordingly by responding to the expectations and attitudes of potential students (B and C) and provide information and programs that support them

through their life transitions (D). According to the model, the entire process will end in the participation of adults in higher education (G).

The highest correlate for enrollment by reentry students remains prior educational attainment (Graney, 1980), while lower academic ability has proven to create a tendency that may lead students to drop out (Hiemstra, 1976a, p. 28). Losty and Broderson (1980) agreed with Graney and Hiemstra and suggested that the first course taken upon reentry is significant in establishing satisfaction with the college experience and possibly subsequent motivation to goal achievement. Frost (1980) found that the biggest problem of adults reentering school was their perception of "not fitting in." Kuh and Ardaioolo (1979) were able to identify differences in adults based on the type of campus they attended that related to the issue of institutional fit. Adults at residential campuses are more "ready to learn" than those at commuter campuses and there appears to be a stronger motivation to complete a program in those who "move in" to higher education as opposed to those who "stop in" between commitments to family, career, and leisure. Prior choice of major appears to be an additional predictor of success (Frost, 1980) possibly giving the reentry student somewhere to "fit in" from the beginning. Some institutions have found that grouping reentry students who have similar apprehensions and motivations during their first college term allows mutual

support and comraderie to develop and improves the beginning experience (Reinfeld, 1975). This may be the same phenomenon that has always existed in higher education where entering first year students take similar or identical courses together at the outset of college and live together in residence halls. Academic independence is gained over time, not expected when they walk through the door on the first day of classes. It appears older students may benefit from this type of program as well.

Of course all students, no matter their age, do not complete their academic programs. However, 7 out of 10 students complete their degree over time, with the primary reasons for dropping out being job responsibilities, lack of time, lack of funds, or illness. Conversely, self-improvement tends to be the main reason for continuing with their academic program (Reehling, 1980). Many of the reasons for dropping out are unrelated to the student. The stated requirements of the institution, attention given during enrollment, informality of the learning setting, attention given to student needs, type of instructional methods, and course content all contribute to whether a student remains at an institution (Hiemstra, 1976a). Adults do have alternatives to higher education that are informal, voluntary, and have unlimited license in regard to substance and relevance (Harman, 1976) in the form of lifelong learning opportunities throughout their community. Given the variety of choices, when adults drop out they may

actually be choosing a better alternative for their unique needs, not rejecting education as a whole.

Adults seeking academic study are a "social challenge" for institutions to provide access to education (Cross, 1976, p. 73). To view them primarily as a way to fill empty classroom seats is a disservice to them and society. The crux of the matter is that the educational experience must be a legitimate opportunity for these individuals to meet their needs or it is a waste of resources and provides a false message to adults seeking reentry.

#### Participation in Higher Education

The growth in the number of reentry students began after World War II when the "G.I. Bill" brought large numbers of veterans to college campuses for the first time. In 1947, 18% of all college students were 25 to 34 years old. This grew to 22% (over eight million students) by 1973 plus an additional 800,000 students 35+ years of age (Plotsky, 1976). By 1981, 33% of all students were at least 25 years old (Magerrell, 1981). Significantly, women at that time outnumbered men for the first time since World War II with the largest increase coming from those over 35 years of age. That segment of the population has doubled since 1972 (Fisher-Thompson & Kuhn, 1981). Another dramatic change in the make-up of the student population is that 72%

of these students over 25 years of age attended school part-time as compared to only 17% of traditional age students (Magerrell, 1981). These data significantly affect program responses aimed at reentry students.

A study by the Association of American Colleges verified that prior experience in higher education continues to be a major factor in return to formal education. While 13% of all Americans participated in some form of adult education, 31% of them had five or more years of higher education, 26% were college graduates, and 20% had some college education ("Knowledge gap," 1984). These part-time adults comprise 26% of the population at universities. Though significantly less than the 64% enrollment of part-time reentry students at community colleges, it is still a major sub-population for universities in these days of dwindling traditional age students (Hamilton & Wheeler, 1979).

Hooper and March (1978) found that 92.8% of the students over 62 years of age had college experience in their youth and Kaplan (1981) found 29% of Elderhostel participants had graduate degrees. It is highly likely that institutions of higher education will have ever increasing numbers of returning students as the children of the baby boom, who attended college in massive numbers, reach their 60s in the year 2035. This society may be in the beginning phases of the greying of our college campuses.

Careers

The trend continues for Americans to change careers, as one in three does so during a five year period. A national study in 1974 showed that 77% of the 18 to 60 year olds wanted to continue their education (Hamilton & Wheeler, 1979). When these data are examined in relation to information from Rawlins and Davies (1981), that career related reasons are impetus for 50% of the reentry students, it appears that education is integrally related to this trend. However, traditional career related programs may not be suitable for reentry students as 79% saw themselves as different than the younger students on campus (Rawlins & Davies, 1981). Based on this information it is inappropriate for campuses to force reentry students into preexisting traditionally oriented programs for career development. The emphasis is different among reentry students in that women are more likely to plan careers in the service professions and identify intellectual stimulation as the highest goal. Men on the other hand are more interested in job preparation and career advancement as managers or in the science oriented professions (Malin, Bray, Dougherty, & Skinner, 1980).

Typical Reentry Student

Data from the National Center for Educational Statistics in 1980 described the typical adult student

attending college, as one who is 36 years old, female (57%) with an income of \$20,000 and two years of college (as cited in Frye, 1980). Frye also noted that this student is usually looking for career and/or personal enhancement at a two year college and is probably paying his or her own way. Eighty-two percent of these students are white and 63% are married. Over 60% of the married students report having one or more children (Zeik, 1980). As noted earlier, the competition to bring this population to campus will increase as projected enrollments of traditional age students decline. This was seen by Zeik as potentially destructive to higher education as a whole as some institutions have not only exaggerated their claims to potential students, but have used false advertising campaigns to fill their empty seats in an effort to remain solvent.

#### Demands on the System

Adults, as a group, represent more diversity in life situations, goals, previous experience, skills, intellectual capacities, and styles of learning than most institutions are accustomed to acknowledging or planning to serve (Weathersby & Tarule, 1980). In addition, Walsh (1979) hypothesized that these adults will return to education with a background of activism from the 1960s and will be less passive than traditional students in their demands as their

numbers increase. The future of higher education will be decided on supply and demand issues and institutions that wish to succeed must begin to address the market place. This seemingly inexhaustible supply of students learning throughout life will demand the programs and services that will fulfill their needs, not passively accept whatever is offered (Bulpitt, 1973). Weathersby and Tarule (1980) stated that the needs and uses of education shift with the life cycle and that individuals use formal education as a support for their life transitions. Unfortunately, society has historically organized higher education primarily around the developmental tasks of young adults, ages 18 to 25. In order to respond to the societal changes that exist today, institutions of higher education must begin to rethink the role of education in helping older adults find resources to restructure their lives. Cross (1981a, p. 9) suggested that institutions encourage a "Blended Life Plan" in which leisure, education, and work are intertwined throughout life as opposed to a cyclic life plan that is presently followed by most individuals and institutions. The demand for educational services is going to exist and while higher education is the obvious supplier to meet the demand, there is no guarantee that another type of institution will not fill the void that exists for many adults seeking further educational opportunities.

Program Needs of Reentry Students

Learning is necessary throughout life as new developmental tasks surface. While most learning is planned, enjoyment or self-fulfillment is usually the driving force (Hiemstra, 1976a, p. 38). It is important then, at minimum, to provide some sort of dialogue about the teaching-learning situation for learners who become reentry students, to help them to understand the parameters of the formal setting they are about to encounter (Candy, 1981). In 1974 the Bureau of Labor Statistics projected that only 20% of the jobs in the United States would require bachelor's degrees for competent performance in 1980. As a result, O'Toole (1974) stated that there are four areas for higher education to address: job fit, relationship between education and job success, work place educational opportunities, and certification and credentialism. Bowen (as cited in Halstead, 1981) further delineated the role of higher education on the premise that it is wasteful to use less than all the capacity of the adult as a reentry student. His 13 principles and proposed guidelines to maximize the use of this capacity are as follows: adults of all ages can learn, they need unbiased information about opportunities to learn, admissions and residence requirements must be flexible, scheduling must recognize job and family obligations, instruction should be tailored to the pragmatic interests of adults, qualified teachers should be used, services to all should be comparable, instructional

and other costs should be the same, colleges should strive to reduce monetary and non-monetary barriers to older student attendance, tuition and fees should be low, supply of new programs should stay ahead of demand for existing programs, and adult programs should be of a quality equal to that of the institution's main program.

We know that students who reenter education have different needs and expectations and that they are not always satisfied with their educational experience. However, one study showed that reentry students at small universities were more satisfied than those who attend large universities (Kuh & Sturgis, 1980). The most important goal of most reentry students (i.e., personal satisfaction) appears to be the area in which colleges and universities have been the least successful. There does appear to be a difference in the experience of students seeking external degrees, however, as they have responded that both personal satisfaction and success in the world of work was gained as a result of their educational experience (Sharp & Sosdian, 1979). One aspect that may be generally overlooked by institutions when trying to program for reentry needs is that the population of reentry students is skewed towards women. Reehling (1979) pointed out that the number of women over 25 reentering college increased 112% between 1972 and 1979. Institutions will have to structure their services with a conscious move towards acknowledging the distinction,

if any, between services geared specifically to women or men if they plan to adequately serve this population.

Creamer and Akins (1981) have identified the major developmental concerns of adults as both traditional age students (17 to 25) and older students (25 to 55) (Appendix B). When comparing the two lists, one is struck by the change in emphasis in which an individual first learns to be independent, and then focuses on coping with the changes that occur as he or she ages. The structures in place at our educational institutions, in the form of counseling centers, academic and career advising programs, residential facilities, health services, and other human service oriented programs, may well be capable of responding to both "types" of students. The difference may only be one of strategy and methodology that is based on a sensitivity to these different needs, not a total revision of existing programs or new, narrowly defined programs to serve only older students.

#### Orientation to Education

Apt (1978) viewed adults as approaching education from five different orientations. They are learning, desire for sociability, personal goals, societal goals, and needs fulfillment. Some mechanism for lifelong learning has become a coping skill necessary for both individual and societal survival (Cross, 1979). The need to stay current in today's rapidly changing world drives the student in some

cases toward using reentry as one of the available options. However, this drive does not keep them in higher education if their expectations and needs are not met. In a study of continuing education programs at public community colleges in the State of Florida, program relevance was found to be significantly related to adult participation (Troup, 1980). For the most part, it appears that adults reentering higher education are not dilettantes passing away the empty hours.

Today's adults have more leisure time and must face the crisis of early obsolescence across the entire range of careers and professions. No previous generation has had to face both this blessing and this curse. Additionally, they retire earlier and live longer (Boyer, 1974). As a result, Boyer suggests that we build more flexible scheduling arrangements into undergraduate years, mix formal and informal learning throughout the adult working years, and give more than lip service to older men and women. Adults interested in higher education ranked personal contact with the institution as the most important reason for choosing to reenter (Apt, 1978). When they arrive, they need a firm grounding in the intellectual basics, knowledge of themselves as developing human beings, and a sense of belonging that fosters a sharing of ideas and values (MacPike, 1981). They will push the university or college to be more flexible and if present in sufficient numbers will force a change in the educational environment.

Family, career, physical, and psychological concerns dealt with from the perspective of addressing an individual's appropriate developmental tasks will provide a legitimate focus for programming (Merriam, 1978). While it appears that part-time study is the present norm for reentry students, there are some alternatives that allow for both academic progress and acknowledgement of the time and financial commitments of adults. Evening programs, summer programs, weekend colleges, co-op arrangements, internships, and external degree programs have proven successful at a variety of institutions (Hall, 1980). These approaches can be broken into two distinct categories. An institution can modify its regular schedules and/or it can add special reentry oriented seminars. In addition to the programs that Hall identified are self-directed study, competency based education, credit for learning from life experience, taking courses from a number of schools in a broader interpretation of independent study (the expanded classroom), and allowing for holistic planning to respond to personal educational and career goals (Blaze & Nero, 1979, p. 5) which provide more alternatives to meet the diverse needs expressed by reentry students.

Frye (1980) suggested the establishment of a lifelong learning or human resource center for coordination of these programs provided its goals and limitations were clearly defined and the academic departments were tied to it. This program recommendation addresses both the broad and specific

needs of reentry students. He suggested, with a touch of cynicism, that institutions allow students to have both dignity and registration; use new students as a reason to repair bad instructors; provide that requirements for adults not be lessened; insure that teachers provide course objectives and explain how they are used; remove all artificial time constraints; make no assumptions about the ability of the students enrolled; insure that faculty give only meaningful, justifiable assignments; integrate adults' experience into the classroom; allow adults time to adjust; have early evaluations and assignments for success in academic settings; and recognize adults' needs for positive reinforcement.

Demko (1979) suggested that the key to a successful program for adults is to develop easier access to programs, to recognize the many subgroups in the population and to market specialized programs to those distinct populations. The relationship between the students and the institution at this point centers on the admissions function (Fauquet, 1983). Adults perceive that universities do not usually want them to enroll (Chambers, 1980) so it is critical that some mechanism addresses their unique circumstances to encourage participation. The students must pass this potential "bottleneck" and proceed into established programs with some support from the institution. An important aspect of any successful program with adults involves some opportunity for counseling, preferably by professionals, as

opposed to administrators or teachers as is more likely (Knox, 1979). Courtney and Wozniak (1978) added that attrition diminishes when an emphasis is placed on the development of life-coping skills as a part of accepted instructional settings and techniques. Adults are most likely to want some individualized contact with one person centering on developmental needs they are experiencing (Olski, 1980). Opportunities to seek personalized help must be available as a support service for adults.

It is not always necessary to have major changes to meet the needs of reentry students. Sensitivity to differences and flexible policies and procedures can be very helpful in creating a positive environment for reentry students (Rawlins & Davies, 1981). Even without specific programs for reentry students, many individuals have been both persistent and successful (Rheeling, 1980). Sensitivity to their needs is best gained experientially by the staff of the institution. Student contact is far superior to pencil and paper needs assessments in gaining information about the campus environment for reentry students. An established student support group provides a vocal collection of students who can identify the needs of their peers and the underlying relative importance of those needs to those who care to listen (Plotsky, 1976).

Programs and Specific Needs '

The concept of providing lifelong learning opportunities has few enemies until it becomes necessary to make changes in the traditional practices of the institution (Cross, 1981a). The institution must undertake an evaluative/planning process through which it identifies the needs of its students, faculty, and staff and its potential students. The focus however must be on the potential clients of the institution if it is to be successful (Murphy, 1981). Murphy suggested a review by the institution of its mission and capability, a market analysis of the community, and a series of campus discussions to include faculty, administrators, and students as starting points in beginning to change an institution towards serving reentry students.

Hodgkinson (1976) stated that there are presently four things institutions can do to attract reentry students without a marked effort. They can leave the campus open through extended hours of operation, provide a liberal studies adult program, provide individualized study, and offer degrees by examination. All of the above are presently offered to varying degrees at many institutions. A change in emphasis to include reentry students in these established programs may be all that is needed to serve many of these individuals. Sherer, Herrig, and Noel (1978) recommended that administrators first research the market place and be willing to adjust the college's programs to

meet reentry student needs. Through these programs it should then provide credit for prior learning, foster self-understanding, build self-confidence, provide a relevant education, and fit the adult's learning style. They go on to suggest that specific programs involving better counseling and advisement, special orientation programs, improved registration procedures, more alternatives in the class schedules, more financial assistance, an increased awareness by faculty regarding reentry students, and increased social contact with their peers to improve the environment and help retain these students when they do reenter.

Carbone (1982) placed more of an emphasis on working with the staff and faculty. By educating and orienting the faculty to flextime and class scheduling variations, providing resources about adults and their unique concerns to the faculty through the college library and a campus wide conference on adults, and providing tuition free classes for faculty members on the topic of adult development the institution can significantly change the environment it offers to the various student populations who enter, or as in this case reenter.

Kegel (1977) recommended an extensive list of services and programs to serve reentry students. These include the development of special brochures and publications directed at reentry students; modification of registration requirements for the convenience of adults so that they can

register by telephone, by mail, at odd hours, and possibly at off campus locations; a reentry specific orientation program; programs to familiarize faculty and counselors to the extent that adults are attending the institution; flexible hours for counselors; a financial aid service that is aware of reentry students; child care facilities; a newsletter and a general inclusion of reentry students in committees and events at the institution.

Saslaw (1981) viewed programs and services from the perspective that most reentry students are employed part-time students. The focus, then, is on helping students develop academic skills and working with schedules, curricula, and instruction that are appropriate to adult responsibilities. Saslaw suggested that institutions modify admission policies, financial aid, and program requirements to serve these students more directly. Wintersteen (1982) placed more responsibility on the student by primarily providing an information and referral service geared to reentry students and a reentry student handbook. Additionally, Wintersteen suggested that institutions should provide a returning student program, have a recruitment and retention program, provide career and vocational counseling, provide social support services, give credit for prior learning, and provide academic alternatives to returning students. Many of these components were used in developing a program for returning homemakers at a California community college in providing a unique alternative to traditional

classes and through specialized recruitment. The result was the development of a strong sense of community among the reentry students in the program with a 60% retention rate and a 100%+ increase in enrollment the following term (Taines, 1973).

Rawlins and Davies (1981) found that many reentry students wanted daytime classes so they could attend while their children were in school, overnight accommodations for commuters, a counselor specifically for adults, workshops aimed at reentry students, and a reentry oriented brochure. Roach (1976) recommended that colleges provide counselors for adults as reentry students, assertiveness training, support groups, conferences to train staff and the student's family, some form of personal support to students, and an orientation program.

Corrado and Mangano (1982) suggested that activities be designated for students and their families, that institutions establish student support networks and a peer counseling program to augment support from staff members, and that they provide information on career and academic options and life span development. They also recommended workshops to sensitize faculty and administration to reentry students, a change in the type of instruction to include home television and off campus options, easier registration procedures for adults (such as an off campus location), tutorial services, a staff designated to work with adults, and child care services.

Cunningham (as cited in Lance, Lourie, & Mayo, 1979) stated that "the older student cannot (and will not) completely fit into a system molded for an 18 year old" (p. 10). Institutions must look at the differences in this population and respond to the unique subgroups. To address these differences, Lance, Lourie, and Mayo (1979) surveyed reentry university students and found that reentry females expressed stronger needs than reentry males. The needs of both male and female reentry students include a designated reentry admissions counselor, an appropriate orientation to campus, an exclusive lounge area for older students, peer counselors, a specialized credit course for reentry students to ease the transition, help with reading and writing skills, availability of individual counseling, possibility of career exploration, workshops on career development, communication and human relations skills, a day care center, a reentry column in the student newspaper, and help with general academic skills. The latter can be augmented with a basic skills assessment to identify and correct weaknesses before they become a negative influence on the student (Suddick & Vaccaro, 1983).

A 1976 study at the University of Massachusetts- Amherst, where 47% of the student population is over 25 years of age, identified financing academic studies, locating housing, opportunities for leisure, and opportunities to rethink educational and career plans as primary needs of the students (Valley, 1979). Notably

lacking from this list of needs when compared to others is that alternative schedules and special orientations are not mentioned as primary needs. Given the size of the older student population it is possible that those needs have previously been addressed when the reentry population first gained significance at the institution.

Services provided by "Students Over Traditional Age" (SOTA) groups at many institutions focus on social activities, academic assistance, referrals, and interpersonal growth. These peer oriented support groups are most helpful in dealing with the self-motivating reentry students (Hunt & Stone, 1979).

Rawlins (1979), when asking students over 30 years of age, found that they not only needed help with enrollment procedures, improvement in services relating to housing, financial aid, child care, and academic advising, but that they viewed themselves as different from traditional age students and that they perceived their needs as being different. A longitudinal study of 1000 individuals who were 30 years of age identified needs in career planning, information about health services, and guidance in human relations skills with an emphasis on marriage (DiSilvestro, 1978).

In response to many of the issues discussed previously, the University of Texas at Dallas decided to establish a college to deal specifically with reentry students. While the courses for the Bachelor of General Studies degree were

drawn from other colleges at the university, the support services and non-academic programs were designed to meet the needs of those enrolled in what the students called "Maturity College." These services included community outreach and recruitment, admissions counseling, orientation, academic advising by faculty familiar with counseling reentry students, financial aid, informal socializing, independent study and flexible scheduling, and extra-curricular activities (Galerstein, 1977). This focus of reentry services allows for greater visibility of the programs and support systems for students. However, the services are basically the same for all students and are probably duplicated in other places on the campus.

Saslaw (1981), combining the recommendations of the Carnegie Commission and the Women's Reentry Project: Project of the Status and Education of Women, provided a summary of specific needs of reentry students. The needs she identified are an admission policy based on ability and achievement, recruitment at the undergraduate and graduate level, financial aid, counseling services, career development programs, faculty role models, academic counseling, psychological counseling dealing with family issues and personal problems, flexible scheduling of courses, ease of credit transfer, availability of credit for experiential learning, non-standard credit programs, skill refresher or remedial courses, child care provisions, and adequate, safe parking and transportation.

Creange (1980) suggested that institutions evaluate existing programs for accessibility and orientation toward adults. He grouped these programs as information services, transportation and commuter services, medical insurance and health services, student employment and placement services, legal services, and extracurricular activities. Hall (1980) added more specific programs and services to Creange's list by including recruitment, admissions and registration, financial aid, transfer policies and residency requirements, flexible course scheduling, and additional support services such as extended hours, child care, and basic skills and refresher courses.

Malin et al. (1980) grouped the needs of reentry students into three broad categories of time problems, financial aid, and counseling/career. These are seen as primarily "first services" to get the reentry student started in an academic program. Subsequent services, however, must be provided to keep the student enrolled and progressing towards individual goals. Rawlins (1979) proposed that during initial enrollment, the student should, throughout all of the academic and interpersonal components, have an opportunity for personal counseling regarding reentry and the evaluation of prior academic work. Following this process are services of orientation, an informational outlet for reentry concerns, support groups, inservice programs to effect change in the system, and the

need for special efforts by the institutions to ensure that adults are aware of existing services.

Kasworm (1980a) found that older students have less usage and perceived satisfaction and need for what she called "Campus Assimilation Services" such as orientation, on-campus housing, the student union, and campus affiliated religious centers. The same was true for "Mandatory Interaction Services" such as health services, student union activities, and academic advising. Older students and younger students reported the same level of usage and perceived satisfaction and need for "Individualized Academic Community Services" such as personal counseling, financial aid, career/vocational counseling, study skills, tutoring, and job placement. The major distinction appears to be that older students viewed on-campus services that were readily available to them in the larger community as less valuable. The element of personalization is the key for adults. Services that give individualized, specialized support that reentry students can personalize to their unique concerns are seen as worthwhile and will be utilized.

#### Free Standing Programs for Adults

Karwin (as cited in Carnegie Commission, 1973, p. 107) proposed the concept of a "Learning Pavilion" as an academic center to address the individualized nature of adult learning. Facilities that include a centralized study room, seminar rooms, tutorial rooms, counseling offices,

administrative offices, technical support and storage, typing rooms, a child care center, and a parking lot would be a hub of activity and support the services needed for adults as reentry students and as a continuing education center for the institution and community. Outside of the academic world it could be equally useful as a free standing lifelong learning center in a community.

Flohr and Sweeney (1982) proposed that an "Adult Learning Specialist" is needed with expertise in the institution's program offerings and academic requirements, adult development and learning styles, individual assessment techniques, occupational and vocational information, and written and verbal communication skills. This individual would serve as the "Dean of Students" for reentry students and could be connected to existing offices or stand alone in conjunction with an "Evening College" or "Learning Pavilion."

Educators must possess an increasing variety of roles to serve adults. They must have an understanding of the adult educator, the field of adult education, the adult learner, adult education environment, programing, and the learning process (Rossman & Bunning, 1978). The General Report of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (1977) stated that it is essential that modern societies respond to adults as legitimate learners for social, economic, and cultural reasons. The needs of reentry students are well documented and closely tied to the

needs of traditional students. Institutions can easily provide many of the necessary services by modifying the perceptions of staff and faculty and filling the gaps in existing services with new programs and support services.

Academic Needs

Adults are people whose lives are overflowing with commitments, obligations, and burdens. The time and energy available to invest in academic pursuits must compete with personal, social, family, community, and other tasks, responsibilities, and diversions that press upon the lives of most adults (Lenz, 1982, p. 2). While the necessity to adapt to the changing circumstances of life constitutes a powerful motivating force (Cross, 1981a, p. 2), the conflicts that arise can inhibit or stop the attainment of educational goals without support from the academic components of a college or university program. Creamer and Akins (1981) suggested that a substantially different environment in content and teaching method is required to create an optimum condition for the development of older students. One way to address this environmental distinction is to base learning on what the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) viewed as the seven literacies. These are stated as communication skills, scientific perspective, sense of time and history, sense of space (connection of parts), arts and aesthetics, knowledge of the body, and Homo Faber (understanding of oneself as a

producer) (Rivera, 1978). However, curricular content is only one part of the equation when dealing with adults reentering higher education. These curricular areas must then be viewed in the context of differing theories of adult development to adequately address their academic needs.

#### Learning Characteristics of Adults

Adults expect the skills they acquired through life experience to be valued and recognized (Prager, 1983). They are not the passive attendants that institutions have perceived the traditional age student to be in the past. Programs and services that give reentry students an opportunity to review skills previously acquired can support enhanced self-esteem and improved academic performance and educational aspirations (Prager, 1983). Hendrix and Stoel (1982) stated that there is a new and revived interest in liberal education with characteristics that follow Kolb's integrative approach to education for adults. There is a focus on helping the individual become an active and independent learner, rather than one who is passive and dependent, and an emphasis on generic knowledge and skills rather than those that are specialized. Flexibility to continue learning, confronting personal and societal values, an understanding of their cultures, and concern for the needs and problems of the future are also indicative of the move by institutions toward integrative learning.

Whitesage (1979) stated that we should discuss the limitations of degrees for adult learners instead of using them to merely keep struggling institutions afloat. Seventy-five percent of reentry students are looking for skill improvement; however, only 5% of the adults that are on campus are credit seeking (Tough, 1977). Tough suggested that the emphasis should be on teaching them how to learn, not what to learn. This is crucial when considering that only 10% of an adult's learning comes through a formal setting, though 90% of adults conduct at least one major learning event each year (Tough, 1981). Institutions can play a major role in affecting the development of lifelong learning skills during a student's relatively brief stay in the formal educational setting.

Hunter and McCants (1977) found that students over 24 years of age showed a stronger preference than younger students for structure and organization in the academic setting. Those who chose to return wanted a formal setting in the classroom. Their strong desire to succeed as students is indicated in that older students are more likely to have a high grade point average (GPA) and married women are more likely to be high achievers as measured by GPA (Von der Embse & Childs, 1979). Men, on the other hand, are less successful in adjusting than women in that they have less positive intellectual and personal achievement during their educational experience and suffered more from family

complaints about time commitments and the amount of money spent on their education (Malin et al., 1980).

The effect of aging on the learning process must be considered when providing academic experiences for reentry students. However, there is a distinction to acknowledge. Research has shown that the "speed" of learning is affected but not the "ability" to learn as one gets older (Frye, 1980). Older students, for a variety of factors, have shown that they can be very successful in an academic setting when the conditions exist that allow them to balance their multiple roles and acknowledge their difference from traditional students.

#### Learning Styles and Needs

In the academic setting, learning and the individual's current developmental roles and concerns are directly and intimately related. Adults have extensive experience that learning can help to transform or extend through focusing on the meaning, values, skills, and strategies previously acquired. This is coupled with the external societal pressures presently forcing new learning to occur, so that adults can remain productive in a society of rapid change. The learning needs of adults center on current life situations from a practical and developmental standpoint (Brundage & MacKeracher, 1980). Relevance quickly becomes a key issue when adults reenter higher education.

Smith (1976) stated that adults take new information and incorporate it into previously organized patterns of knowledge. Their learning style can be understood in terms of amount of autonomy, procedures to be used, the pace and timing of learning, and the sensory paths best utilized. Adults are more likely to use generalized, abstract thought and are likely to express their own needs and learning process to instructors which allows them to negotiate and collaborate in planning their own learning experience (Brundage & MacKeracher, 1980). They differentiate between learning styles, which is the "changing" of meanings, values, skills, and strategies and cognitive styles which is "organizing" experience into meanings, values, skills, and strategies. In attempting to meet the academic needs of reentry students, Brundage and MacKeracher suggest five guidelines for institutions and instructors to incorporate into their philosophical base. They are as follows: every adult has his or her own individualistic style for processing information and for learning, no information is available on how adults develop their learning style, teachers must acquire skills in facilitating learning styles, there is no best way to learn, and adults self-select learning institutions.

Lenz (1982, p. 24) cited special learning problems of adults that include the learning conditions (physical surroundings), psychological barriers, memory barriers, poor study habits, and basic skills deficiencies. Though the

reentry student has become a significant subculture on campus today, institutions still assume that these students should adapt to the environment designed for 18-22 year olds (Kasworm, 1980a). We continue to use formal schooling (in the most traditional sense) as the way to educate adults. Paradoxically, most adults do not use a formal setting for their learning, so success of those few who attempt to adapt to the environment of campus are the pioneers who may broaden the educational opportunities on college campuses for their less adventurous peers.

Billingham and Travagliani (1981) found five characteristics to predict success in an individualized degree program. They are age at entry (the earlier the better), GPA, number of hours transferred or obtained through experiential learning, types of learning options utilized, and attitude towards personnel and counselors of the institution (if they saw them as helpful). The biggest breakdown in programs for reentry students comes not from lack of support services or academic services, but from the fact that there are no combined programs that provide support services and academic content in one program (MacPike, 1981). There is no coordination between the various components of an institution to meet the needs of the whole student. The result of this type of response by institutions is that there is a lack of some services at worst and duplication of other services that if combined

could provide resources for other needed services not being addressed.

#### Strategies for Serving Academic Needs

Tarule and Weathersby (1979) stated that the developmental process is a continuously more sophisticated way of learning how to learn. The style by which an individual learns is thus an important consideration that allows one to adapt to new and unfamiliar surroundings against the context of the learner's environment and experience (Pigg, Busch, & Lacy, 1980). There are many similarities between effective teaching of young adults and older adults as reentry students. However, older adults are unique individuals in their breadth of life experiences, demands on their time, varied and competing sources of attention, approach toward the learning task, and inactivity of learning and study skills (Forman & Richardson, 1976).

Brundage and MacKeracher (1980) stated that all adults, when entering a new learning experience, begin with dependent type behaviors and move toward interdependent learning behaviors as they proceed. During this process, adults utilize three modes of learning described as directing, facilitating, and collaborating. All three are important at various times for the learner but there is no best mode for a teacher-learner relationship. A variety of situational factors affect the best mode at the time of learning. These include subject matter, size of class,

availability of other resources, and interest level and abilities of the students among others.

Lueers (1983) stated that it is important to get adults involved in their learning both practically and emotionally. Relevance to their goals as learners is critical, as is a connection to the vast store of knowledge they already possess prior to their reentry. Lueers suggested that differentiated learning styles and a slower pace, coupled with non-cognitive factors such as support and assistance, will be productive in getting and keeping adults involved. Frankel and Brennan (1983), however, viewed this relationship more simply and suggested that the goal is to help the adult students see themselves as autonomous individuals by teaching problem solving through a case study approach. The latter method, also supported by Lueers, is designed to get the students involved with the learning process. It is integrative in nature as it addresses multiple skills, different learning modes as described by Kolb, and an interface with previous experiences of the learner.

Lenz (1982, p. 21) developed the following criteria necessary for adult learning to occur: the information has some personal meaning for them, they can relate what they are studying to their learning goals, they are active participants in the learning process, they are exploring new information and experience, the learning sessions are uninterrupted and extended over a substantial span of time,

they can consolidate what they have learned before going on to new information and skills, they receive feedback during learning, and they can learn in an unpressured, non-competitive environment. Lenz also restates the uniqueness of adults and supports the learner-centered approach to education to complement the individuality that is lacking in a subject-centered curriculum. Adults favor a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary approach to learning in order to integrate phenomena into their experience. The most suitable teacher-student model in this context becomes one of three relationships: host-guest, client-consultant, or partnership.

Knowles (1973, p. 102) stated the goal of teaching is one of providing procedures and resources to help learners, not the mere transmittal of information and skills. He describes an "androgogical teacher" as one who establishes a climate conducive to learning, creates a mechanism for mutual planning, diagnoses the need for learning, formulates program objectives that will satisfy needs, designs a pattern of learning experiences, conducts experiences with suitable techniques and materials, evaluates the learning outcomes, and rediagnoses learning needs.

Weathersby (1976) cited the purpose of formal education as one of legitimizing continued development by easing the transition through the various life phases. Institutions, then, should respond to life phase issues through enhancing consciousness of adult development, extending the definition

of legitimate learning, reconceptualizing educational goals (learning styles as well as content), analyzing the assumptions underlying programs, reviewing policies and instructional methods in the context of adults as learners, and support of the faculty (Tarule & Weathersby, 1979). Programs that provide for integration of prior life experience, life planning activities with future academic experience, and academic programs that demand the use of analysis and communication, address some of these issues (Hendrix & Stoel, 1982). As an example, Lake (1980) described a simple program designed to meet the needs of blue collar workers on shift work that is totally individualized (including orientation to the program) through the use of audio tape, while Zeik (1980) suggested the "weekend college," which mixes experiential and classroom contact, as another method to serve adults in new ways. Both programs have continued problems with advising and counseling but are able to address other barriers that restrict reentry and offer learning experiences to those who would ordinarily be excluded from formal education.

Of course, night programs, weekend colleges, and the like are not a panacea. While two-thirds of the institutions of higher education have programs that include directed reading, life work experience, independent study, travel study, community projects, internships, and even no class requirements the problems arise where there is a heavy dependence on unsupervised part-time faculty and little, if

any, available auxiliary services such as libraries, a counseling center, and a bookstore (Zeik, 1980).

Rawlins and Davies (1981) supported the idea that major changes will not be needed to meet the needs of reentry students. Instead, sensitivity and flexible policies and procedures can accomplish significant change to meet these needs. In a traditional view of education, knowledge that is taught remains static while knowledge that is used tends to be dynamic (Ingram, 1979, p. 8). Many perceive colleges and universities as remaining static in today's rapidly changing world. It is clear that higher education, in particular, must begin to provide society with adaptable individuals who are relevant through their knowledge of how to learn, not what they have learned, if the gap between what is needed by society and the individual and what is offered by the educational system is to narrow.

#### Experiential Learning Theory

In an attempt to resolve the gap between what is offered by higher education and what is needed by society and reentry students, Kolb has developed a model for education that combines learning theory with developmental concerns across the life span of individuals. He began by defining learning as the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience (1985, p. 36). Learning is a continuous process that is grounded in experience, where present experiences as well as those

incorporated from the past are repeatedly compared to form new knowledge and effect new experiences. In this context, the outcomes of learning are not as critical as the process that is used. Kolb viewed this process as holistic in nature yet involving opposing modes of adaptation to the world. This opposition must be resolved for learning to become incorporated into knowledge. Learning has to be related to the interaction between the person and the environment while resolving the conflicts that arise as an individual tries to adapt to the world. When applying this concept to education, learning that combines work and study as well as theory and practice provides the individual with a better opportunity to test new information against their own accumulated experience and wisdom (Kolb, 1985, p. 6). This is very important to those who reenter higher education as they demand that there be some relevance to the educational experiences they are required to complete.

The learning process is conceptualized as a four stage cycle through which an individual proceeds. Learning begins with the Concrete Experience (CE) of the individual and leads to Reflective Observation (RO) during which the individual digests the experience and reflects on it from a variety of perspectives. The third stage in the learning cycle calls for Abstract Conceptualization (AC) in which the observations are integrated into reasonably sound theories for personal use. This leads to the final stage of Active Experimentation (AE) in which these theories are put into

use to make decisions about the surrounding world and to solve problems that may arise (Kolb, 1981, p. 236). The natural progression is that this experimentation leads to new experiences which will begin the cycle again. The new cycle will of course be affected by the previous experience.

These four stages call for the individual to use opposing methods (modes) of learning as they proceed through the cycle. The individual moves alternatingly from being directly involved with the experience to detaching himself or herself to analyze the event. Kolb (1981, p. 236) has described this contrast as moving from actor to observer or specific involvement to general analytic detachment. The successful learner is one who is able to choose the most appropriate method to use at any given moment while learning and will move back and forth between interaction and detachment.

Kolb has gone a step farther with his theory of learning than those who view learning as purely a cognitive process. Building on the work of Lewin in the 1940s and the sensitivity training of the 1950s and 1960s, he has proposed an interface between learning and experience that addresses the distinct role that experience plays when an individual learns. However, once experience is interjected into the model, time and the effect of cumulative experience must be addressed as well. In response to this factor he has added

a third dimension to the model to identify human development issues and stages as they relate to experiential learning.

To simplify the model, Kolb has divided the human growth process into three broad developmental stages (Kolb & Fry, as cited in Kolb, 1981). Acquisition is the period that lasts from birth to adolescence during which the major learning tasks center around cognitive structures and basic learning abilities. This stage has been studied extensively by Piaget as a cognitive learning theorist. The next stage, specialization, brings the individual through formal education or career training into early adulthood and focuses on the development of a distinct learning style that best meets an individual's needs in a chosen career path. Multiple forces are at work during this stage, internally and externally, to shape the individual's learning style. The final stage is identified as integration and begins at approximately mid-career for most individuals. Integration is marked by the emergence of the non-dominant learning modes that have been held down by the dominant mode needed to succeed in a chosen career path. There is a rebirth of enthusiasm at this point in an individual's life that could result in a career change, a significant lifestyle change or new direction in the previously chosen career. This stage coincides with what some have identified as the mid-life crisis. Kolb, however, has placed it into a context where it cannot be considered to be a crisis, but instead a

natural growth stage that is best described as a resolution of previous learning through experience.

With the interface between the circular model of the learning cycle and the vertical continuum model of personal growth, the experiential learning model of Kolb now assumes the shape of a cone. This model of a cone shows the changing relationship of the learning modes through the three stages of development. The base of the cone is represented by the acquisition stage with the four learning modes at their polar positions on a circle. As an individual moves through time, represented by the vertical axis of the cone, the four learning modes move closer to each other as the individual's desire for integration of his or her learning increases.

Kolb (1985, p. 162) has stated that integration has suffered in higher education in the modern era. The increased emphasis on professional education and the specialization of the curriculum has limited the amount of integration of learning that is possible. Add to that the size of some universities and the logistics of instructing large student populations and it becomes more apparent why there is little emphasis on experiential learning as a planned part of the curriculum. However, with today's new student populations, there is a rich resource for integrative development. Dialogue across the age levels at a university provides an opportunity for new experiences and learning in a context of lifelong learning (Kolb, 1985,

p. 207). The richness of these interactions can add dramatically to the learning experiences of all members of the educational community.

Ultimately for experiential learning, as Kolb has envisioned it, to occur, the entire institutional context is at issue. The departments, university structure, mission and philosophy of education, alternative learning environments available, selection and evaluation criteria for faculty and students, social networks outside of classes, campus atmosphere, and the like (Kolb, 1985, p. 205) must provide opportunities for integrated learning experiences as the norm, not as special programs for those who seek them out. Institutions have the resources to provide the opportunity for learning that addresses the entire learning cycle and the increasing size of reentry student populations at institutions is providing the necessary demand for this shift in emphasis in curriculum. What is needed is a shift of focus that will allow these vast resources of our institutions of higher education to meet the needs of these students and society.

#### Summary

The adult student is returning and will continue to return to formal education to address personal and career related issues. Whether it is the credentials it bestows or merely the depth and breadth of university life that is attracting reentry students is unimportant. The focus of

education has always been the college campus, and though new forums and technologies will expand opportunity, the nucleus of higher education remains the campus with its faculty, library, and in the most basic sense, its ivy covered walls.

Institutions of higher education are attracting increasing numbers of adults and incorporating them into the main stream of traditional university life. It is not a fair assessment of the abilities of these adult students to merely grant them admission and assign them a class schedule. Universities can provide the support services necessary to ensure the success of adults returning to education and in the process provide an updated, well educated, and enriched work force for society.

While it is arguable that there may be better alternatives for adults to continue their learning, they, as individuals, have chosen in many instances to join university communities and as tuition paying members make demands of both academic and human services. The responsibility now rests with the various institutions that open their doors to this expanded student population, to address the resulting expanded needs. Failure to respond adequately may very well result in disgruntled, frustrated, and angry citizens who are disenchanted with formal education and probably less than sympathetic to the fiscal and philosophical issues that face higher education today. Addressing the needs of reentry students will provide the

opportunity for a successful experience when student and institution interact, and increase the value of both.

Determining the needs of this diverse population prior to attempting service delivery is critical in this period of limited resources for higher education. Institutions and individuals must acknowledge their desires, basic needs, limitations, and values to begin addressing the global needs of reentry students in an organized and thoughtful manner. This study begins to identify these similarities and differences and provides a starting point for institutions and reentry students to begin this process of serving diverse student needs.

## CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY

The justification for a study of reentry students has been outlined in Chapter I and supported by a review of available literature in Chapter II. This chapter will explain the process used to complete this study including the development of a survey instrument, identification of the sample, and the compilation and analysis techniques of the acquired data.

### Development of the Instrument

A review of current literature was utilized to begin to identify both the expressed needs of reentry students at colleges and universities and the programs and services that have been designed to meet those needs. Studies that focused on providing academic and human service support for reentry students at community colleges, private universities, small state colleges, and large public universities were identified through a search of the ERIC data base and professional journals. This provided a broad cross section of programs and institutional responses to reentry students under a variety of conditions and institutional programs. Though the study was limited to two

large public universities, resources of typical institutions of higher education were used as a basis for determining the variety of programs in existence for reentry students. This method identified the widest range of programs that could conceivably exist at a large multifunction university. Through the various resources identified in this manner, an extensive list of needs was generated by combining the results and recommendations of the various studies and reports (Appendix C). Kolb's theory of experiential learning was used to organize the list of reentry student needs around central themes that he identified as the context of the institution. The structure of the survey addressed the following areas: structure of the institution, mission and philosophy of education, alternative learning environment, selection and evaluation of students and faculty, social networks outside of class, and campus atmosphere (Kolb, 1985, p. 205). Kolb states that for integration to exist at an institution, certain conditions must be met within the context of the institution as outlined above.

Within the structure of the institution, reentry students should be integrated into the traditional population of the institution and its curriculum to encourage dialogue across age levels (Kolb, 1985, p. 207), and successful programs should have a focal point for learning such as the role of the professional or in utilizing learning methods that require multiple

perspectives (Kolb, 1981, p. 252). In the mission and philosophy of education, the institution should encourage the development of lifelong learning skills (Kolb, 1981, p. 252) and acknowledge and address the diverse student population across age levels. The institution should offer alternative learning environments by providing learning experiences that are directly tied to adult experience (Kolb, 1981, p. 252) through internships, co-op work programs, work study programs, independent study, and external degrees. Additionally, the faculty should offer methods in the classroom that combine work and study with theory and practice (Kolb, 1985, p. 6). Through the selection and evaluation of students and faculty, there should be flexible admissions and residency requirements, the granting of credit for prior learning, and an understanding by the faculty of the diversity of various learning styles (Kolb, 1985, p. 6). Social networks outside of class should support opportunities for reentry students to interact socially and through student activities, and provide opportunities for dialogue across age levels in a social context (Kolb, 1985, p. 207). In the final area of campus atmosphere, the institution should express an acceptance of the diverse nature of the student population and an acceptance of reentry students as part of the student population (Kolb, 1985, p. 6).

The survey instrument was constructed by developing open ended questions that corresponded to the needs of

reentry students identified in the review of literature as they applied to these central themes. The focus of the questions addressed the degree of integration of learning experiences as identified by Kolb, to determine how each institution attempted to meet the needs of reentry students at the later stages of adult development. The questions were then organized into a structured interview format that was used as the survey instrument (Appendix D). Each interview was intended to last approximately 30 minutes. As each question was open ended, there was the possibility for further exploration of some issues through follow-up questions by the interviewer for purposes of clarification.

#### Selection of Subjects

Two institutions were selected to be the focus of this study. The individual subjects were then selected from the populations of these institutions. The criteria used to select these institutions and the individual respondents are described in detail below.

#### Selection of Institutions

This study gathered data from individuals at the University of Florida (UF) in Gainesville and the University of Georgia (UGA) in Athens after they were identified as being the largest public institutions in their respective

states with each having an identifiable population of reentry students.

The University of Florida

Located in Gainesville, UF is the largest and oldest university in the State University System of Florida with a traceable history from 1853. In 1906 the university was established in Gainesville and merged with the land grant college that had been located in Lake City. It is a residential campus with total enrollment in the fall of 1985 of over 36,000, the largest university in the south, and the 10th largest in the nation. Along with Ohio State University and the University of Minnesota, it offers more academic programs on a single campus than all other public and private institutions with over 114 academic majors and correlating graduate programs located in 20 colleges and schools. The University of Florida is one of nine universities governed by the State Board of Regents in Florida. It is recognized nationally for its programs in agriculture, forestry, engineering, and accounting. The campus includes a major medical center which houses the Colleges of Medicine, Dentistry, and Veterinary Medicine among others and the university has a College of Law (University of Florida, 1985, p. 3).

Gainesville is a city of approximately 85,000 in the northern part of Florida. There are no major metropolitan areas within easy commuting distance of the campus so

students must reside in the Gainesville area to attend UF. Consequently, the large residential student population causes the university to have a strong influence on the economic and physical environment of Gainesville and the surrounding area. The presence of UF is also visible throughout the state through the Institute of Food and Agricultural Science which supports facilities and extension programs in all Florida counties. There are individual academic programs that exist off campus serving specific urban populations, but the focus of UF is as a research center for the state of Florida in the form of a traditional university. The university was selected in 1985 to join the Association of American Universities (University of Florida, 1985, p. 3).

The University of Georgia

Founded in 1785 and physically established in 1801, the University of Georgia (UGA) is located in Athens, a city with a population of over 75,000 located approximately 60 miles east of Atlanta. The university has a traditional liberal arts background and was broadened to become a land grant university in 1872. It presently is organized into 13 schools and colleges with a fall 1985 enrollment of approximately 26,000 and since 1931 has been governed by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. The strong traditional influence is evident in its motto: To teach and to inquire into the nature of things.

Subsequently, it views itself as a research center that has both a primary focus on teaching and as a provider of service to the state through its extension and continuing education programs (University of Georgia, 1985, p. 3).

Selection of Administrators

A telephone directory of each institution was obtained to identify individuals who held specific positions in the administration. Emphasis was placed on identifying those individuals who held the following positions or their closest counterpart: Vice President for Academic Affairs, Associate or Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Student Affairs, Dean of Students, Registrar, Director of Admissions, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Associate or Assistant Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Director of Instructional Resources, and Dean of the largest college on campus other than the College of Arts and Sciences.

The above group of administrators was used in this study because they are responsible for policy formation and program development at their various institutions within their administrative areas. Their understanding of the issues surrounding reentry students will determine or impact the orientation of any academic or student service program in their college. The leadership of these individuals will determine whether their college or division serves reentry students either consciously or as a hidden minority that

must conform to the traditional norms of university students.

The administrators were contacted by telephone and individual interviews were scheduled based on the availability of the respondents. Five administrators were interviewed during the traditional work day at each institution. An attempt was made to have at least one of the interviews with an administrator in the Division of Student Affairs at the institution. During the interviews the individual's responses were recorded through the use of hand written notes.

Selection of Students

With the assistance of a staff member in the Division of Student Affairs, the Registrar at each institution was contacted to obtain a complete list of students enrolled as undergraduates in a degree seeking program who are 25 years of age and older. This list included name, local address, student classification identifying graduate or undergraduate status, and local telephone number. Fifty individual students were chosen at random from the supplied list and contacted in writing to request that they participate in the study through a telephone interview (Appendix E). The individuals at each institution were then contacted by telephone in the evening and on the weekend over a 3-week period with the goal of completing interviews with 20 individuals. These individuals were contacted at each

university as a sample of opportunity from the 50 students who were originally contacted in writing. The interview process was identical to that used with administrators.

#### Survey Procedures

Administrators and students were contacted as a sample of opportunity as described above. When contacted by telephone, respondents were asked if they would agree to take part in the study at that time or decline to participate. If they agreed to continue, a statement was read to the respondent outlining the scope of the survey and to provide a working definition of reentry students for this study. Questions were asked in sequence with some follow-up questioning for purposes of clarity or further explanation of each response. Responses were recorded by hand during the interview and compiled into a data base on a microcomputer at a later date.

#### Data Processing and Analysis

These data were collected over a span of two separate 3-week periods through telephone interviews by one individual. Guba (as cited in Patton, 1980) stated that the first problem that a researcher has to resolve with qualitative data of this type is that he or she must determine "what fits together." The researcher looked for recurring themes when comparing data from the various

respondents and groups of respondents to determine if the data could be grouped by theme or topic area. Patton (1980) stated that inductive analysis can be used to identify patterns, themes, and categories of analysis. He stated that the researcher can then use predefined themes to organize the data for presentation. This method was used by the researcher by first reporting the data within the context of the research questions.

The data were grouped by institution and cross referenced by the administrative title or student status of the respondent. Information from each interview was extracted and organized around central themes that appeared consistently in various responses to identify similarities and differences among the individual responses and the two institutions. After the central themes were identified from individuals and by institution, comparisons were made among administrators at the different institutions, administrators and students at the same institution, and students at the different institutions. Similarities and differences were identified among the above groups and combinations of groups to identify the full range of needs at public universities and the programs and services offered. Data from each group of respondents were described separately within each group of questions. These responses were then grouped by theme within the six criteria identified by Kolb to describe integrated learning at an institution of higher education. These themes, identified

by the researcher, were stated as perceived needs of reentry students.

A list of the needs identified by the reentry students was developed from the information gathered in the student interviews. The information gathered from the administrators was also developed into a list based on their perception of the needs of reentry students. A distinction was made between programs that presently existed at their respective institution and those that should be offered to reentry students. Comparison and analysis of these lists and the responses to the survey questions led to suggestions for program development and program modification at public institutions in both the academic and human service areas. These suggestions are reported in detail in Chapter V of this study.

All data reported in the body of Chapter IV is in narrative form to utilize the breadth that exists in qualitative data. The responses to each question in this study were also organized around a taxonomy developed by the researcher and reported as quantitative data by type of respondent at each institution (Appendix F).

#### Summary

A series of personal interviews was conducted at two large public universities to obtain information from reentry students at least 25 years of age and administrators regarding the needs of reentry students at that type of

institution. The interview centered around themes taken from Kolb's theory of experiential learning to determine if large public universities were providing educational experiences that meet the needs of adults reentering higher education. Additionally, the interviews compared what is offered by institutions with the expressed needs of reentry students to determine if Kolb's theory was accurate in describing the need for integration in the learning experience.

Chapter IV reports the findings of the interviews and an analysis of the information gathered. Comparisons and contrasts are made between the various groups of respondents and placed in the context of the experiential learning theory to develop suggestions for future program direction and studies.

## CHAPTER IV RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The basic problem of this study was to compare the theoretical needs of reentry students as identified by Kolb with the needs as perceived by selected reentry students and university administrators at two large public universities in relation to the services and programs of the universities. With a goal of contacting 40 individuals, 38 reentry students from two institutions were actually interviewed and included in the study along with 10 administrators who held key positions that could possibly affect programs for reentry students at each institution.

### Sample from the University of Florida

Twenty telephone interviews were completed with reentry students attending the University of Florida. These reentry students interviewed included 6 women and 14 men who were at least 25 years of age or older and who were enrolled in academic programs that led to the baccalaureate degree. They ranged in academic standing from freshmen to senior and were enrolled in a variety of colleges including education, engineering, pharmacy, architecture, and liberal arts and sciences. All telephone calls were completed during the

evenings or on the weekends. Data were recorded by hand written notes that were subsequently transferred to an electronic data base program on a microcomputer for manipulation and comparison.

In addition, five interviews were completed during normal working hours with the administrators. The administrators were all persons who had worked at the University of Florida for periods ranging from 6 to 29 years. They held the titles of Dean for Student Services, Director of Admissions, Vice President for Student Affairs, Associate Vice President for Business Affairs, and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Data were recorded in the same manner using the format that was used when interviewing students. The data from each source were therefore directly comparable.

Sample for the University of Georgia

Using the same time restrictions and methods described above, 18 reentry students were interviewed from the University of Georgia after contacting all individuals with current telephone numbers from the random sample of 50 individuals that had been originally contacted in writing. One other individual, when contacted, declined to participate in the study because of her work schedule. This was the only individual who declined to participate at either institution. The remaining individuals in the group of 50 were either unreachable in the evenings or on the

weekend during the 3-week period, or they did not have a current telephone number. The reentry students interviewed included 11 women and 7 men in a variety of colleges including agriculture, fine arts, arts and sciences, pharmacy, and education. All of those interviewed were 25 years of age or older and were seeking degrees in programs at the baccalaureate level. Similar to the University of Florida, five administrators were contacted during normal working hours. This group included the Director of Admissions, Vice President for Student Affairs, Vice President for Business Affairs, Associate Dean for Arts and Sciences, and Senior Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. All data were maintained in the same manner as at the University of Florida for ease of comparison.

Structure of the Institution

Kolb stated that institutions should integrate reentry students into the traditional age population and encourage dialogue across age levels. He also believed that successful programs should have a focal point for learning such as the role of the professional or by the use of learning methods that require multiple perspectives on the part of the student. The questions in this portion of the survey addressed both universities' orientation program and the types of restrictions and services that the universities offer.

Reentry Students

The majority of reentry students interviewed at the University of Florida did not take part in the university orientation activities and had little or no knowledge of them. Most of them chose not to attend after being informed of their existence but one individual stated that she had not known that an orientation program was available. The few who did attend expressed disappointment over what was offered. The harshest criticism was a statement calling the program "stupid and a waste of time." Another student, after stating it took eight hours to register, said "I could have done better on my own." Only one student interviewed felt that orientation was a good experience and provided reentry students a good overall view of the university.

When asked if they were aware of any special accommodations for reentry students during orientation, most of those interviewed were not aware of any. Individuals acknowledged the availability of a student support group that operated on campus but had not followed up or asked for more information about it.

Some individuals stated that during individual conversations they were discouraged by faculty members in their chosen college at the university. One of them stated that he was told by an advisor "you're not going to make it; don't waste our time." Another individual acknowledged that working full time prohibited participation in any type of program like orientation. While most reentry students had

no knowledge of orientation, the general consensus of the respondents who had any knowledge of orientation was that there was no acknowledgement of the differences between traditional age students and reentry students.

The question of barriers to reentry at the University of Florida brought responses that could be divided into three general categories. Many of the respondents stated that there were no barriers to their reentry to the university while the majority of the individuals responding focused on either problems with academic restrictions for admission, or problems relating to differences between their own age and that of the majority of the student population.

Academic restrictions to reentry centered around requirements for minimum test scores on standardized tests and previous academic experience in either high school or a community college. One student stated that he was required to take a course at the university that he had completed at a community college because the university would not award transfer credit for the course. Another student stated that the time lag since finishing high school had caused her to be deficient in college preparatory courses by present standards. She added that she had been required by the university to attend a community college to complete basic courses in mathematics prior to becoming eligible for admission to the university. The lack of the availability of night classes at the undergraduate level was identified as the greatest barrier to reentry by only one individual.

This was surprising because the lack of night classes has consistently been identified by students as a major barrier to reentry at most institutions.

Age considerations were predominant as a barrier for many respondents. One individual stated that he felt most activities at the university were focused on 18 and 19 year old students while another expressed that "you want to have the same interests but you can't relate to them." Some stated that they felt caught between their own fears of "being a grandfather among the youngsters" and being treated as a traditional undergraduate by the faculty: "Are you a student or are you a worker?" In more general terms one 31 year old student expressed this perceived barrier as just feeling "out of place" because everyone is young.

The most important services that a university could offer reentry students as perceived by students at the University of Florida covered a broad range of needs. Individuals identified financial aid as a priority with one individual stating that the focus of financial aid services should be on what is available, not just the mechanics of filling out forms. Academic advising, especially in the form of individualized attention with one advisor, was identified by a large number of students as well as an improved orientation/advising program. Also mentioned by those interviewed was a need for academic support, housing for families, mental health counseling services, and social groups for reentry students. One individual stated that the

best service a university could offer is simply to "readmit them," implying institutions should lower barriers to admission.

At the University of Georgia, most of the students interviewed attended the university orientation while some individuals stated that they did not attend as reentry students because they had gone to the university as traditional age students and did not feel the need to attend. The focus of the orientation program at the University of Georgia was similar to the program at the University of Florida in that they both were designed to provide information about academic programs and registration to traditional age students. A small number of individuals stated dissatisfaction with this format. One individual stated, "it was horrible for me; they put us in dorms with students straight from high school." Also included in the program was a bus tour of the campus and small group sessions focusing on the services available at the University of Georgia.

Several of the reentry students stated that there was a special orientation program for them as part of the university orientation; however, the majority of those interviewed did not know of any program or special considerations. One individual stated that she was contacted by the university prior to enrollment and a luncheon for reentry students was held during orientation to foster social contacts with other reentry students.

Most of the reentry students at the University of Georgia believed that there are no barriers to reentry at the Athens campus. Those individuals who did describe barriers mentioned financial aid problems as a critical area of concern because local banks in the Athens area were unwilling to support insured loans for reentry students. While this could be a problem for all students, the problem was described as being more critical to reentry students because they do not have a home town bank to turn to for assistance as do traditional age students. This was viewed by reentry students as a form of prejudice against them as they do not have other options available in this important form of financial aid.

The lack of child care facilities on campus was also described as a significant barrier. Other individuals mentioned the difficulty in making social contacts for reentry students and their families due to the traditional nature of the institution and its student activities. This was exacerbated by the outside responsibilities of work and family for some individuals. A few of the students felt that the class schedules were not flexible enough for their situation, especially when they conflicted with work and family responsibilities.

Child care services for students' families, married housing, financial aid, social groups for reentry students, academic support services and advising, and a source for reentry students to use in obtaining information about

available services were listed by individuals as services needed for reentry students entering a university.

An important distinction between the students interviewed at the University of Florida and those at the University of Georgia was that there were some Georgia students who felt that there were basically no differences between the needs of traditional students and reentry students and therefore no need for special programs and services for reentry students. The Florida students, on the other hand, believed that reentry students do have unique needs that need to be addressed by the institution.

Administrators

Administrators at the University of Florida were well acquainted with the university's orientation program. As a whole they saw the major purpose of orientation as providing academic advisement and registration services to new students along with general information about the campus environment. There was an acknowledgement by all administrators interviewed that the focus and emphasis of orientation was on traditional age students with the most emphasis placed on the summer program called "Preview," which is designed for traditional age college freshmen and their parents. Transfer students were given a separate orientation but it was a shorter program that provided only academic information.

Reentry students were informed of, and eligible to participate in, all orientation programs. However, they did not receive special consideration except on an individual basis when the students identified themselves as reentry students or raised issues that were of concern to them during the regular orientation. Several of the administrators were aware of the existence of a social group for reentry students called Students Over Traditional Age (SOTA) and they believed that the organization assisted with orientation. They were, however, unable to describe the role of this organization.

Administrators saw barriers to reentry students at the University of Florida in much the same manner as the reentry students themselves. The main barrier was seen to be the image of the university as an institution for traditional age students, though this was not seen as a problem of age difference as had been stated by the reentry students, but one of program focus. This traditional image was held by the institution itself as well as those who attempted to enter as students. One individual stated that the small number of night courses restrict access to those who work full-time. Though administrators felt that the faculty as individuals were reasonably accommodating to reentry students, they believed that the campus in general was not sensitive to the needs of reentry students. They felt there were no housing facilities for single reentry students and no academic support programs specifically oriented to them. Some of the

administrators felt there were no barriers for those reentry students who had a good academic background but acknowledged that those who had previously left education due to academic failure might need special guidance when reentering.

While no administrator at the University of Florida mentioned financial aid as a priority for reentry students, all of them acknowledged the need for some form of academic advising with several mentioning that it should be done through a personal interview. One administrator felt that these students should have an advisor from their college assigned to them so that they could receive "sound and reliable" advice, while another described the academic advising process as a relationship with a "sensitive academic and career advisor who would work with them as a point of contact and support." Administrators identified social contacts with other reentry students as a priority with one of them suggesting a physical facility such as a lounge or office, that was designated for reentry students as a way to foster these contacts. Some individuals suggested that the university offer programs to assist in the transition from life as a non-student to life as an undergraduate student with a focus on academic skill development and accurate information about services available on campus. They believed that this was a potentially difficult transition and the university could provide much needed support in this area.

All of the administrators at the University of Georgia were knowledgeable about the university's orientation program and described it as a standard program "like any other university." Additionally, one individual stated that a group of women administrators had started a program to help nontraditional women become oriented to the university and that this program had ultimately broadened the university's orientation perspective to include special sessions for different student groups. Except for these special sessions it was described by one administrator as being similar to the orientation at the University of Florida. The Dean of Students at the University of Georgia had at one time been responsible for orientation at the University of Florida as an assistant dean which may account for the similarity.

Some of the administrators stated that there was a separate program for reentry students in which the format is the same as that for traditional age students. However, the emphasis of this program was placed on the unique needs of the reentry students at the undergraduate level. This program includes a panel discussion with reentry students, a luncheon, and a session about the support network available to reentry students at the university. Despite this program's availability, there were administrators who were not aware of any special considerations for reentry students in the orientation program.

The perception of administrators regarding barriers to reentry students at the University of Georgia was similar to that held by individuals at the University of Florida: They defined barriers as the result of the traditional emphasis of the university and the subsequent insensitivity of that environment to the needs of reentry students. One administrator stated, "there are no deliberate barriers; people just aren't aware [of reentry student concerns]."  
There was a general feeling that barriers were individually defined by the student within the environment and some individuals stated that there were no barriers at all. One of the latter individuals actually believed it was easier for reentry students to gain access to the University of Georgia because if there were seven or more years since completion of high school, students were not required to take the SAT and their high school grades were largely ignored as a criterion for admission.

Child care was again singled out by some of the administrators as a needed service as well as the relaxing of restrictions on financial aid requirements for part-time students. Several of the individuals who were interviewed tried to emphasize that all programs for students are important and the priority is not that they are reentry students but that they are a student population with distinct needs that have been identified much like international students or minority students. These individuals believed the focus should be on the specific

need and corresponding service, not the population being served. Other services mentioned that could benefit reentry students were flexible class scheduling, priority in registration for reentry students, and a support group with a newsletter to disseminate information about programs and services that could help reentry students.

#### Mission and Philosophy of Education

The development of lifelong learning skills in its student population and an acknowledgement of the diverse student population across age levels were considered by Kolb to be important aspects of the mission and philosophy of an institution. The question in this portion of the survey focused on the relationship of the institution to reentry students, the resources allocated for them, and the programs at the university that were oriented toward the support of lifelong learning.

#### Reentry Students

Most of the reentry students interviewed at the University of Florida describe their relationship with the institution as being no different than the university's relationship with any other student. However, there were some students who expressed their relationship in these terms: "impersonal," "cold, not much of a relationship," "passive acceptance," or "just a number." One student

stated, "I don't think they know I exist." On the positive side, some students expressed their relationship as "good," "fine," "they [academic department] bend over backwards for me," and "some professors like reentry students more because they are more serious students." Those who expressed the most positive statements always referred to their academic department as the focal point for the positive relationship, not the university as a whole.

Only one student interviewed at the University of Florida had any knowledge of the continuing education program at the university. This individual was a nursing student and was aware of the need for nurses to maintain their licenses through Continuing Education Units (CEU).

There were three groups of responses regarding the fostering of lifelong learning skills while at the university. One group of students identified their professional curriculum as fostering the need for lifelong learning in such areas as engineering and the medical science fields. One of these students stated, "my career forces us to have lifelong learning" or as another stated, "in mechanical engineering, everything will be used later." The second group of responses focused on the methods of learning through liberal arts curricula and the extracurricular activities available at the university. Those types of responses are exemplified by a liberal arts and sciences major who stated "the basic value of education is teaching people how to get information," and a student in

the College of Education who said "I received valuable information on relationships with people and perspectives on life." Finally, a third group of respondents stated that they had either "no knowledge" of whether or not lifelong learning was fostered or they saw their education as one student stated "solely to get a job at the end." To these individuals the education process and the career experience were divided by graduation. They were related as sequential experiences rather than interactive experiences that would enhance learning in both areas.

Only a few of the students interviewed were aware of specific resources designated for reentry students. Some mentioned a student support group and married student housing. Others, though unable to identify specific programs, stated their belief that there must be resources designated for reentry students and more information could be obtained if you just "ask the right people." This seems to signify that there is a need for more publicity about resources available to reentry students at the University of Florida.

Only a few of the reentry students interviewed at the University of Georgia described the relationship of the institution to reentry students in negative terms. One student felt that they were not generally treated as adults and another described it as "impersonal." The remaining individuals were positive in their assessment using descriptive terms such as "amiable relationship," "pretty

positive; pretty encouraging," "excellent, they are interested in you and helping you survive," and "real cordial." Several individuals stated in a positive manner that they were treated "like everyone else."

A large number of the students interviewed were aware of the continuing education program at the university, but were only able to describe it in general terms. One student had taken some courses for credit in the university's evening program but most of the students described the program as a very active schedule of workshops, seminars, and short courses for professionals. Another individual described it as being "weak academically" and felt it did not have a good reputation with degree seeking students. Approximately half of the students had no knowledge of the program.

The majority of reentry students described the focus of lifelong learning at the University of Georgia as being centered around their professional area of study. However, there was no college of engineering at the University of Georgia so the emphasis is in business, agriculture, and health sciences. Others responded that they felt the institution in general fostered lifelong learning skills but they were unable to identify the specific ways in which this was accomplished. They stated it as "you pick it up on your own" or "nothing specific; any course can be helpful."

When asked about the commitment of resources for reentry students, those interviewed responded similarly to

the students at the University of Florida. Several individuals stated that they thought the university committed resources to reentry students and mentioned the orientation program and the student support group known as SOTA. The majority of those interviewed said they had no knowledge that any resources were committed for reentry students.

Administrators

Administrators at the University of Florida described the institution's relationship to reentry students in negative terms. They, like some of the students interviewed, saw the relationship as "for the most part, not much different than to the other 28,000 undergraduates." Other terms used by administrators included "reasonably impersonal" and "benign neglect" as well as the descriptive statements "we have a system here; there are rules and you have to adjust to the system" and "a university this size will let a student go his own way." One of the administrators believed that, in general, the faculty of the university felt that reentry students deserve a second chance at succeeding in higher education, but he stated that this perception was based on five or six success stories with which he was personally familiar and not official university programs or departments.

The administrators were basically familiar with the continuing education program at the university and described

it as a program for place-bound adults with a focus on certification and extension courses. The University of Florida was responsible for the correspondence study program for the entire State University System of Florida and was described by one individual as a national leader in this area. However, the various components of continuing education including correspondence study were perceived as not directed toward degree seeking reentry students.

All of the administrators stated that the university fostered the development of lifelong learning skills through its academic curricula and its extracurricular activities. One administrator stated it as an "intangible of the academic side" while another stated "we teach them to think, then they can think the rest of their lives." An administrator in student affairs mentioned the over 300 student organizations in which students can apply their classroom learning and another individual stated "everything is here; it's just a matter of if you are going out to get it."

There was general consensus that "very little" or no resources were designated to serve reentry students. One administrator stated that the Office for Student Services assigned an assistant dean to work with reentry students with a limited budget and another stated that he was aware that student affairs had some resources designated for reentry students, but could not specify their extent.

Administrators at the University of Georgia were positive about the relationship of the institution to reentry students though one stated that he doubted the university recognized them as a formal program. The relationship was described as "cordial" and "very strong" with an acknowledgement by one individual that the evening credit program through the Georgia Center for Continuing Education was more sensitive to reentry concerns.

Administrators were very familiar with the continuing education services program at the university. They described an extensive, statewide program that offered a full range of services from workshops to an evening program for credit at the Athens campus which offered courses through the sophomore level. One individual stated it would take 15 minutes to describe it in detail due to its extensive nature, while another stated that it was the biggest Kellogg Center for Continuing Education outside of Michigan, serving over 180,000 people a year. The evening program for credit was described by one administrator as having the reputation of "the poorest junior college" but was, due to its lower admission standards, the path many reentry students took at the University of Georgia during the first two years of their degree program.

The history and tradition of the liberal arts at the University of Georgia were evident in the responses of the administrators when asked if the institution fostered lifelong learning skills. Most of them focused on the

liberal arts as a basis for all learning at the university. One administrator stated "I hope that we instill a love for lifelong learning in all our students." Another administrator mentioned the influence of the Center for Continuing Education on the campus as a factor in instilling in the institution's students the skills and interest in lifelong learning.

Though there was no centralized program for reentry students, most of the administrators were able to mention programs that were designated for reentry students. They mentioned the support group (SOTA), programs from the counseling center, programs from the student affairs division, and in a broader sense the evening program of the Center for Continuing Education. The one administrator who did not believe there were any resources designated for reentry students was in the office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

#### Alternative Learning Environments

In order to have integrated learning at an institution, Kolb believed that there should be opportunities for students to combine their life experience with their classroom learning through the use of internships, co-op work programs, work study, independent study, and external degree programs. Additionally, he believed that the faculty in the traditional classroom should use teaching methods that combine work and study with theory and practice as an

enhancement to the learning process. The questions in this portion of the survey focused on the academic services and learning experiences available at each university as they applied to the above issues.

Reentry Students

The reentry students at the University of Florida gave mixed responses regarding the availability of class offerings outside the normal working hours. Only one of them stated that there were any courses available on Saturday but most of the individuals stated that there were no evening or weekend classes available in their colleges. There were many statements of dissatisfaction with the lack of a sufficient number of evening classes. One student described it as a "real disadvantage" and several others mentioned how difficult it was to work and attend school at the university as a result of the restricted scheduling of classes. An engineering student stated "you're out of luck if you don't have a flexible work schedule."

Co-ops were mentioned most often by reentry students as programs that combined experience with classroom learning. However, one student felt that they were not as appropriate for reentry students by stating "as a reentry student I had work experience already; I cannot afford time to do co-op; I have to finish as soon as possible." Other examples mentioned were as follows: internships, laboratory exercises, field placements prior to internships, use of

computers with computer assisted design (CAD) systems, volunteer programs, studio classes in art, independent study, and field trips. There were several students who either felt that there were no experiences that combined classroom knowledge with work or that they were very few in number and subsequently not valuable due to the restrictions of large class sizes and antiquated equipment. The type of experiential opportunity in the classroom for most students appeared to depend on the subject matter taught. While engineering students most often mentioned co-ops, students in education mentioned internships and art and architecture students mentioned studio experiences.

There were no alternative degree programs identified by the reentry students at the undergraduate level though some individuals mentioned correspondence and independent study as components of their traditional program. While one student felt there was a variety of opportunities to augment their program, another student in the College of Engineering was rather bitter about his experience, stating "everything is cut and dried to get a piece of paper that says you're smart. If you don't do them, you don't get the piece of paper and I guess you're not smart." The majority of respondents had no knowledge of any alternative degree programs.

The majority of the individuals interviewed stated that the 1-hour lecture was either the only mode of instruction or so predominant that other experiences were not relevant

to their learning. Several of this group cited video taped lectures as an alternative but one student commented that this was "even worse" and another described video taped lectures as "just a talking head." One student stated that the university should get rid of lectures completely because "nobody learns anything in these big lectures; they're just to find out when the test is [scheduled]," while another individual viewed them as adding to the "do or die" atmosphere at the university. Some students cited examples where studio classes in 3-hour blocks, computer assisted instruction, and group process techniques were used to bring the emphasis back to the individual learner as being positive learning experiences for them. Others stated that they needed more practical experience and more variety in the classroom through visuals, guest lectures, small classrooms, tutors, and labs.

When asked about the availability of academic programs designed for reentry students, only one student felt that there were any programs offered on campus, mentioning nursing and education. All of the remaining students stated that they had no knowledge of any existing programs.

At the University of Georgia, most of the students were aware of the availability of courses in the evening. Most of the courses were described as being designed to satisfy core requirements for the first two years of study; however, some of the students cited problems in particular colleges because of limited night offerings during the junior and

senior years. One of the individuals interviewed commented that it is impossible to get an undergraduate degree by going at night. This is exemplified by an inability to meet the university's physical education requirement through evening classes. Another student stated that the evening program was a separate program from the "day program" and that it had a reputation for being easier. It was this student's position that there were "definitely not" any night classes available at the University of Georgia.

The majority of reentry students at the University of Georgia, like those at the University of Florida, again mentioned co-ops as a program for combining experience with classroom learning. Additionally, they mentioned internships, college work study, seminars, television production classes for journalism students, and a special program with a local DuPont plant that hires students in a modified type of co-op in which students work weekend shifts and go to school full-time during the week. Only a few individuals had no knowledge of any programs of this type.

Many of the reentry students believed that it was possible to get a degree through an independent study program at the university with one stating "you can design your own degree according to the catalog." None of the students interviewed used this option either for a degree program or an individual course. Several of them stated that they did not know of anyone who had ever used it. The majority of the reentry students had no knowledge of any

programs for alternative degrees at the University of Georgia.

The most common method of instruction at the University of Georgia was the 1-hour lecture; however, several of the students interviewed stated that on their own initiative they sought out other learning experiences such as tutoring sessions and independent study. One student complained "I've had to sit through some of the most boring unlearning experiences in lectures" and another stated "lectures don't exactly get it." Alternatives that were mentioned included special labs in mathematics, case study discussions which were "a heck of a lot more interesting," art classes, field experiences, labs, simulations, demonstrations, peer critiques, and individual help by the instructor. As at the University of Florida, several students mentioned that the availability of different teaching methods depended on the subject matter.

Only one of the students interviewed identified a program designed for reentry students by mentioning the Center for Continuing Education at the University of Georgia for "those students trying to work." The remaining individuals stated they had no knowledge of any programs designed for undergraduate reentry students.

#### Administrators

The administrators at the University of Florida verified the perceptions of the reentry students that there

were very few night classes available. According to one administrator, the amount of evening classes offered depended on the college and in some cases, as in law and business administration, the colleges tried not to operate at night or on the weekend. The College of Education was mentioned as one college that purposely offered night and weekend classes.

Co-ops were mentioned by all of the administrators especially as it applied to the College of Engineering which according to one administrator has had a 35 year history of co-op experience. Internships were mentioned by most of the administrators as an example of combining experience and classroom learning, while independent study was mentioned by one individual as an option for those individual students who took the initiative to seek it out.

There were no alternative degree programs identified at the University of Florida by the administrators interviewed. One of the respondents stated that it was "not perceived to be our role," but another was more direct by stating "UF is a traditional school and current administration wants to keep it that way."

The administrators who were interviewed believed that the large number of students and the subject matter being taught were the factors most responsible for the dependence on the lecture format. Any deviation from the lecture/lab format that occurred at the University of Florida was seen by one administrator not as a function of dealing with

different learning styles but more likely an attempt by a faculty member to try something new. Additionally, he stated that "they are not motivated by desire to address different learning styles." Another administrator stated that he believed lectures were over emphasized. All of the administrators were aware of examples of alternative teaching methods that were actually offered such as field trips, labs, computer courses, off-campus experiences, and discussion groups but admitted that the primary format at the university was still the 1-hour lecture.

None of the administrators could identify an academic program designed for reentry students at the university. One of them pointed out that if information was gathered from colleges with enrollment declines, some changes might be evident in their academic programs if an attempt was made to increase enrollment with reentry students by using flexible scheduling and off-campus programs.

Administrators at the University of Georgia identified the courses offered at their institution as two separate programs with a day program going until about 6:00 p.m. on weekdays, and an evening program that operated each weekday evening from 6:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. The evening program offered about 50 or 60 courses that could be applied to the first two years of the general degree programs. Students admitted to the day program which had more restrictive admission requirements were eligible to take evening classes

but the reverse was not true of those who are admitted into the evening program.

All of the administrators identified the co-op programs at the university as well as the availability of internships. One administrator stated that there are about 200 co-op placements each academic quarter. He considered this to be a high number of placements considering that the university does not have a college of engineering. This individual also mentioned the program coordinated by the university in which the local DuPont plant hired students to work the weekend shifts at normal wages so that they can continue to attend classes at the university on weekdays.

There is no external degree program at the University of Georgia but one administrator reported that students could earn a degree in interdisciplinary studies and take up to 45 hours in independent studies courses at the university. The program was described as being rigorous and allowed students to design their own curriculum. None of the other administrators stated that this degree was available but they were aware of the availability of independent study courses.

The administrators interviewed had a variety of responses to the question concerning alternate teaching methods. One of them believed that the subject area dictated the methods used, while three others mentioned TV courses developed through the Center for Continuing Education as alternatives to classroom lectures. Other

alternative teaching methods that were mentioned included laboratories, art studio with individual instruction, team teaching, independent study, field classes in ecology centered around two week camping trips, and exemptions to course requirements by departments. One administrator stated that alternatives were encouraged throughout the university because the President imprinted his philosophy of lifelong learning on the institution. He stated that the President believed "the teachers never stop being a student" and that this well known statement of personal philosophy influenced individual behavior on the part of the faculty.

When asked about academic programs designed for reentry students, administrators separated the day program from the evening program by stating "that's Continuing Education's responsibility," and "only the night school; if in the day school they follow the regular curriculum." The evening program was identified by the administrators as the only program that was designed for reentry students.

Selection and Evaluation of Students and Faculty

Kolb stated that a flexible admission policy and residency requirement, the granting of credit for prior learning, and an understanding by the faculty of the diversity of various learning styles that best meet the needs of reentry students should exist at an institution of higher learning. The questions in this area of the survey

focused on these issues as they related to each institution.

Reentry Students

The University of Florida based admission decisions on standardized test scores and previous academic credentials either in high school or at the college level. In individual instances, some students interviewed stated that they had been able to petition a university committee for a waiver of the university requirements. One of those individuals felt that their age and work experience was helpful in gaining admission through this program. A student in the College of Architecture stated that in addition to her academic record, her artistic portfolio was also evaluated.

Most of the students interviewed stated that no special considerations were given to reentry students regarding admission to the University of Florida. One individual stated that recommendations combined with his experience in the Navy helped him to overcome his low grades in high school when seeking admission to the Department of Nuclear Engineering. A few other students used the university petition process that was mentioned earlier to gain admission to the university after being denied. "Don't take no for an answer" was the way one student described the admission process. Another student, when describing how inflexible the university was, mentioned a reentry student

who, as a result of frustration with the admission process, had admitted to forging her own high school report cards to gain admission.

The majority of students stated that there were no methods that could be used to gain credit for previous experience; however, some saw the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) as a way to gain some credit in a degree program. One of these individuals expressed anger however because those credits earned through CLEP placed restrictions on the number of credits for which he could enroll in his first two years at the university. He felt that restrictive rules such as that were designed to hurt students and not help them as the CLEP program was intended. Some individuals mentioned that they received credit for their military experience but were not sure what form it took and could not cite any specific manner in which the credit was awarded.

A majority of the reentry students stated they thought that the faculty and staff were understanding of the differences between reentry and traditional age students if it was brought to their attention or if a personal relationship was developed with the instructor. However, many felt that they were not viewed as being different by all or some faculty and staff and as one married student with children stated "they didn't care if we had other pressures; we had to do the work or else." One student claimed that the faculty had a "so what" attitude and

another felt that the faculty was "not prepared to handle them very well." This same person stated that most teachers seem to forget that everyone is not 18 to 20 years old. A student in engineering reported that a graduate assistant instructor "told me I was dumb" while a student in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences said in some courses they are "treated like children." She also acknowledged that in some courses she is seen "as a resource" because she is so active in class discussion and another student stated that he thought instructors were more appreciative of reentry students because they have a higher dedication to learning.

The reentry students at the University of Georgia stated that admission to the university was based on scores on standardized tests and grades in previous academic work in high school or college. Only one student stated that his admission was handled on an individual basis and that he had not taken the Scholastic Aptitude Test as was required.

Based on their own experience a few of the students believed that admission standards were modified for the special admission of reentry students. The remaining respondents had no knowledge of any special admissions and one individual even stated "my father was the Registrar and I didn't get any break."

There were a variety of examples cited by the students interviewed in which credit for prior experience was granted by the University of Georgia. Individuals who were veterans

of military service cited their military experience as being used to waive a physical education requirement and several students stated that CLEP credit was available. One student reported that she was given credit for work experience in medical technology from another academic program and some students mentioned that anyone could challenge a course by examination. In this instance they could receive credit by achieving a certain percentage score on an exam given by the instructor. The remaining students said they had no knowledge of any method of gaining credit for previous experience.

The overwhelming majority of reentry students interviewed stated that the university faculty and staff understood the differences between reentry students and traditional age students. Only a small number of individuals stated that they felt the faculty was not understanding but one of those individuals believed it did not matter because "reentry students have a big advantage because he or she is more stable; they don't have to worry about the issues of growing up." There was a difference observed by some students interviewed in the amount of understanding of these differences by the faculty. One student stated "they are more understanding because reentry students are more serious, but they expect you to be like other students" and another stated "they have a good understanding but they do put a heavy workload on you." More common were statements like "very understanding,

especially if you have a family or are married" and "very well if married or working . . . they go the extra mile for you" as well as "very responsive that I have to work but they don't let me slide." Similar to the students at the University of Florida, several of the individuals stated that the level of understanding was situational and that in some circumstances it was possible to develop personal relationships with faculty and have them respond to the unique needs of reentry students.

Administrators

University of Florida administrators stated that the admission requirements at the university were based on standardized test scores and previous academic performance in high school or college. One administrator mentioned that the Board of Regents of the State University System placed those restrictions on them. As a result of the board direction the majority of the administrators stated that the university did not modify their admission standards for reentry students. However, some of them were aware of the petition process for special admission of reentry students to the university.

The only credit for prior experience granted by the University of Florida was for transfer of academic credit from another institution and credit granted under the CLEP program. One administrator stated that there was no way to gain any credit for prior experience.

The administrators who were interviewed felt that there was little understanding of the differences between reentry students and traditional age students by the majority of the faculty and staff at the university. A student affairs administrator stated that he believed there was "no antagonism toward them" and that "there might be a fascination if allowed to interact." However, he felt that there was probably a lack of contact between reentry students and most faculty. An individual in academic affairs stated that he perceived a "degree of tolerance," on the part of faculty, "to let them prove that previous failure was an aberration rather than a weakness." Another administrator acknowledged that in his area of control "understanding is one thing, doing something about it is completely different" due to restrictions imposed by the Board of Regents.

According to the administrators surveyed, the admission requirements for the University of Georgia were based on standardized test scores and previous academic experience in high school or college. Some administrators cited the lower requirements for the evening program and acknowledged that in the 13 schools and colleges at the university there was some variance in the admission requirements.

The University of Georgia used the evening program of the Center for Continuing Education to admit those individuals who did not meet the more stringent requirements of the university. Most reentry students that were not

admitted to the "day program" enrolled in the evening school, though one administrator stated that there was an appeal system if they wanted to attend during the day. The university also waived the requirement for a standardized test score if the student had been out of school for at least seven years but in these cases required that they enroll in the evening program. Looking toward the future, one administrator stated that the Board of Regents was planning on implementing a test that, when in use, would assess the academic level of reentry students for placement and be used to give special consideration to reentry students.

The administrators reported that there was no method to receive credit for prior experience at the University of Georgia except through the more traditional methods of CLEP and transferred academic credit. Only one individual mentioned that students could challenge a course by taking an exam and some of the individuals were not aware of any methods available to reentry students.

Most of the administrators interviewed stated that they thought the faculty and staff were understanding of the differences between reentry students and traditional age students. One of those acknowledged, however, that the faculty in the evening program was more sensitive to their needs. "On a scale of 1 to 10 we are a 6" was the way one individual described the level of understanding. This individual pointed out that faculty members and their

families are the best example of a population that continues to learn throughout their lives and that as a result, the faculty member brings that personal experience to the campus in their interactions with other reentry students. This same person, however, stated that most faculty are "too lazy to change anything or be creative" and that their basic approach will still be "if you want it, come and get it, but it's at my calling."

#### Social Networks Outside of Class

According to Kolb, institutions should support opportunities for reentry students to interact socially and through student organizations, and provide opportunities for dialogue across age levels in a social context. Questions in this part of the survey focused on the extracurricular services and programs that were offered at universities to address these issues.

#### Reentry Students

Some of the reentry students interviewed at the University of Florida mentioned SOTA when asked about non-academic programs offered to reentry students while several students mentioned other student organizations and special interest clubs as being available. Most of the students who were interviewed had no knowledge of any programs for

reentry students. One of these students stated that the reason for this was that he was married and stayed at home.

When asked to identify programs that could help reentry students, they mentioned academic advising as an important service. Other services mentioned by at least one individual included mental health counseling, financial aid, a career resource center, a student health service, and married housing. A group of individuals mentioned social organizations, though one of those individuals acknowledged that Greek letter fraternities would be excluded from this group of organizations. There was a small group of students who stated that they had no knowledge of programs and services that would be useful to reentry students.

There were varied responses according to the specific need of the individual when the reentry students were asked to identify the services they would like to see offered at the university. Some individuals stated that they needed an orientation process that accurately showed them what to expect at the university. One student said "it's humiliating to be in class with 18 and 19 year olds; you don't speak the same language" while another stated "they expect anthropology students to know about computers; they did not exist when I was a student." Several individuals mentioned the need for remedial classes to help bring academic skills up to college level. Other services mentioned by at least one individual included social programs, recruitment of more reentry students so there were

more of them on campus, more information about services on an ongoing basis, counseling, and child care services. There was a group of individuals who also stated that they did not think much about services because they were just trying to finish their degree as soon as possible. One rather bluntly stated, "services are for the young."

Many of the reentry students interviewed at the University of Georgia were aware of the SOTA group on campus although there was a perception that "very little" was done beyond that. One student mentioned that he was able to register by mail but in general he thought that reentry students were not that unique from traditional age students. More than half of the individuals had no knowledge of programs and services designed for reentry students.

When asked about other programs available to serve reentry students, a majority of the individuals interviewed stated that all activities and services that existed on campus were available to them with one noting "it's just a matter of choice." Only one student appeared dissatisfied when he stated "nothing really; most are geared to traditional students." Others only mentioned the counseling center program and that it helped reentry students with employment and career decisions. A few individuals stated that they had no knowledge of any programs.

When asked about services and programs they would like to have at the University of Georgia, a number of reentry students mentioned a program that would help them with the

transition back to academic life that "goes beyond orientation" and others stated a need for child care services. Many of the students interviewed stated that they had no extra needs that were not already being met. Other programs mentioned by at least one individual included an increase in the number of night and weekend classes offered, credit for previous learning, social groups for reentry students, and better parking.

Administrators

Most of the administrators at the University of Florida mentioned the student support group (SOTA) as a program for reentry students and two mentioned the married housing program. An administrator in the Division of Academic Affairs stated that there was an office that served transfer students from the community college system in the State of Florida that might serve reentry students as well. Only one administrator stated that he had no knowledge of any programs for reentry students. When they were asked about social services for students, all of the administrators believed that the variety of student organizations and services offered by the institution would serve reentry students. However, one of them also mentioned that he thought that Greek letter fraternities would not be appropriate for reentry students.

The administrators stated that the institution should provide some designated staff to serve as advisors/counselors to the reentry students at the university. One of the individuals also stated the need for a special orientation, a publication for reentry students, support groups sponsored by the counseling center, and a duplication of the married housing services for the general reentry student population. Suggestions by other administrators were an increased flexibility of class scheduling and the availability of social organizations designated for reentry students.

Some of the administrators at the University of Georgia mentioned the support group for reentry students while one also identified an orientation program and a newsletter directed towards reentry students. Others stated that they had no knowledge of any programs for this group of students. One administrator stated that he believed that reentry students came to the university for educational not social purposes and there were few programs for them as a result.

Similar to their counterparts at the University of Florida, most of the administrators in Athens responded that all activities and services for the general student population were available to reentry students. However, some of the individuals stated that they had no knowledge of any programs at the university that would serve both groups of students.

When asked about specific services they would like to see offered for reentry students, some individuals expressed a strong need for child care services, including health care for children. Also mentioned were increased flexibility in the bureaucracy regarding both course offerings and financial aid, and a specialized orientation for reentry students. One of the administrators had no suggestions for improving the services to reentry students and another believed that "nothing more than we have now" was needed.

Campus Atmosphere

Kolb stated that an institution should express an acceptance of the diverse nature of the student population and accept reentry students as part of the student population. The final area of the survey asked questions about the relationship of the institution to its student population and the types of services that would enhance the learning experiences for reentry students at each institution.

Reentry Students

All of the reentry students at the University of Florida stated that they were integrated into the classroom with traditional age students and that there was not a special program available to them to attend class with just reentry students. While there was a general consensus that

this was not a problem for them, one of the students stated that this actually causes more stress for reentry students because it makes them feel that they do not belong at the institution.

Many of the students interviewed stated that the relationship between the general student population and the university was impersonal and that they were treated like a number. Only a few of the students interviewed described the relationship as good or positive in any way. The remaining respondents described the relationship in negative terms. "You really have to demand help," "crummy; they jerk students around a lot," and "the university wants to get a buck from the student; the university does it any way it can" are examples of their comments. One student explained that "if you don't have initiative, you get lost in the shuffle" but another described the same feelings more harshly by stating "all they see is \$35.00 per credit hour; they don't care if you make it; they really trash you."

Though some of the students stated that they were not aware of any ways to improve the university for reentry students, the majority of the respondents were very vocal about what was needed. There was, however, little consensus among the various students. Some of the individuals saw the need for better orientation with another individual adding that it would be helpful to have special counselors for reentry students. Another group of students believed that reentry students should be given special considerations by

the university because they were more serious students. They would like to have a priority status when registering for classes due to inflexible personal schedules and specialized academic support through individual help from instructors and tutors. Another group of individuals mentioned the need for more flexibility in the curricula and the need for more night classes. A few students stated in the most basic sense that they needed better instruction in the classroom with one of them stating "education is not about grade point averages, it's about students in rooms with teachers; they've forgotten what education is all about." Other areas mentioned where change would be regarded as positive included more child care services, increased availability of financial aid, a general sensitivity on the part of the university to women's issues, the recruitment of reentry students, credit for prior work experience, and rather cynically, the removal of 16,000 students to make it a more personal atmosphere.

All of the students interviewed at the University of Georgia stated that they were integrated into the classroom with the traditional age population. None of them believed this was a problem and one student commented that "no one calls me Pops."

Most of the students interviewed stated that the relationship between the university and the general student population was good. Several others mentioned that the size of the school made it impersonal but none of them stated it

as a negative factor. Instead, they stated it as more of an indifference and that it was the student's responsibility to speak out as an individual to achieve their goals. Several of the students interviewed mentioned that there was no student government at the University of Georgia and stated that this restricted the ability of students to speak out as a group. This lack of a unified voice for the student population may be responsible for fostering this feeling of independence on the part of individuals and encouraging them to be more aggressive in meeting their needs.

Some of the students interviewed stated that they did not know of any ways to improve their experience at the University of Georgia. The suggestions for change that were made were similar to those at the University of Florida, but there was even less consensus of opinion. Some of the areas mentioned included better orientation to ease the transition toward becoming a student, academic advising, flexibility in class offerings and degree programs, credit for prior experience, improving the quality of instruction, and increased financial aid.

#### Administrators

All of the administrators interviewed at the University of Florida stated that the reentry students were integrated into the classroom with traditional age students. None of them mentioned a program in which they were separated due to their age or status as reentry students.

There was a difference in the way in which the administrators described the relationship of the university to its general student population. Some of them described it as a good or positive relationship with one of them stating "most students are happy to be here." The majority stated that it was "reasonably impersonal" or "something less than total warmth" because of the size of the institution and resulting constraints on facilities. One of the administrators stated that it was up to the students to decide what experiences they will choose and that in general, "we're assuming maturity."

The responses of the administrators regarding what changes they would make to improve conditions for reentry students centered on orientation services and academic advising. They believed that more personal contact with the student through advisors/counselors would be helpful and one of them mentioned the possibility of a campus wide forum to sensitize the faculty and staff to the needs of reentry students.

Most of the administrators at the University of Georgia stated that reentry students were integrated into the classroom with traditional age students. One individual stated he had no knowledge of this area.

The administrators at the University of Georgia were not in agreement in describing the relationship the institution had with reentry students. Only one described it as "good" with the other individuals mentioning that

there was too much diversity in the student population to identify one relationship. An administrator in academic affairs mentioned that there was a strong career orientation by the students that resulted in a serious academic atmosphere, but this emphasis was described as being generated by the students, not by the institution.

When asked in what ways the university could be improved for reentry students, the administrators stated that the most important change would be to "define reentry and establish a program" with the purpose of "letting them know we are aware they are here." Another stated that offering more night classes would be the change that would be most beneficial. Other changes mentioned by administrators included flexible financial aid, child care, an external degree program, a broader schedule in the summer quarter, and a way to let them know of the services available to them. One individual stated that he did not feel qualified to answer this question because he did not work closely enough with reentry students in his professional position.

#### Discussion

Kolb has offered guidelines for institutions of higher education to follow when planning to serve reentry students and their varied needs. The goal, if these guidelines are followed, is to provide an integrated learning experience

for an older student population that has needs apart from traditional age students due to their differing stages of development as adults.

Structure of the Institution

Kolb stated that reentry students should be integrated with the traditional student population both socially and academically and through use of the curriculum the university should encourage dialogue across age levels. He also stated that successful programs should have a focal point for learning such as the role of the professional or the use of learning methods that require multiple perspectives on the part of the student.

Reentry students

From the information gathered in this study, it appears that large public universities do indeed integrate reentry students into the general student population and that the reentry students who attend these universities view this approach favorably. At the same time, many reentry students want specialized services that run concurrently with the main university services to meet specific needs in areas such as orientation, social organizations, financial aid, academic advising, academic skill support, mental health counseling, and family services, including child care.

Students at both universities did not identify significant barriers at their institutions. They viewed any barriers to reentry from an individual perspective and not as something that the institution was doing to restrict access. Their own discomfort with being older than most of the students at their institution was identified as the most significant barrier they had to face. Of course, all the students surveyed had been admitted to a university and were making progress towards a bachelor's degree, so their statements would not reflect barriers that would totally restrict some individuals from applying to a university or those who were place-bound a significant distance from a university and subsequently unable to attend.

Kolb theorized that the university could use either the role of the professional or learning methods that require multiple perspectives to provide successful academic programs to reentry students. However, with students at large public universities, there is a stronger emphasis on the reentry student's chosen profession as a focal point for their learning rather than on learning through multiple perspectives. The emphasis on the role as a professional brings together the different stages of Kolb's theory of experiential learning in which active and reflective modes of learning are used by the individual to provide perspective to the learning process. When this cycle of learning is combined with the structure of a large public university that is divided into schools and colleges by

profession, there exists a convenient and logical manner to define learning by the reentry student.

Administrators

The administrators who responded to this survey described the existence of barriers at their institutions in much the same manner as the students themselves. The traditional nature and reputation of their university was mentioned as the most significant barrier to reentry as it provided an atmosphere that was not conducive to the needs of older students. The administrators believed that their universities were meeting the needs of reentry students academically by including them in the classroom experiences offered to all students. The degree programs available, the teaching of various subject matter, and extracurricular experiences were believed to provide significant learning opportunities for these students. There was no focal point for learning identified by the administrators but instead they described a broader context of an institution providing multiple services and opportunities to learn. The students then had a variety of options from which to choose to best meet their individual needs.

Administrators at these institutions for the most part viewed reentry students as a minority population with specific and legitimate needs. However, they provided services and programs for the majority population of traditional age students and tended to respond to reentry

students as needs were brought to their attention. The programs and services provided for reentry students were started by individual administrators or offices within the university to meet needs that have been identified through contact with reentry students and are not coordinated by a single office or individual. For the most part, services for reentry students at large public universities were by-products of the services to the majority population. An exception to this may be child care services, but many schools including the University of Georgia do not have this type of program.

Mission and Philosophy of Education

The development of lifelong learning skills in its student population and an acknowledgement of the diverse student population across age levels were considered by Kolb to be important aspects of the Mission and Philosophy of an institution. These aspects are necessary if integrated learning is going to occur for adults attending the university as degree seeking students.

Reentry students

There was a difference in the way that students and administrators viewed the development of lifelong learning skills in that the students stated their expression of those skills in terms of content data learned in a professional

area. They spoke of how important lifelong learning was to their profession and that the knowledge they were acquiring in school would be used later when they were working in a professional position. Few of them mentioned the development of non-academic skills that they had sought or discovered as part of the educational experience at their university.

Reentry students and administrators down played the role of the continuing education program at their institution and tended to view it as a separate institution with a separate function. Many of the students interviewed at the University of Georgia were very familiar with the program on their campus but all of them claimed that they had never used it. In reality, some of them had taken courses through the evening credit program which is administered by the Georgia Center for Continuing Education, but they thought it was not a part of continuing education, possibly because academic credit was earned for the courses. One of the students stated that "you go for a degree or you go for lifelong learning; there are two different focuses" as if they were mutually exclusive. The reentry students at the University of Florida had practically no knowledge of the Division of Continuing Education.

Regarding Kolb's belief that an institution should acknowledge a diverse student population across age levels, there was a difference in the way students and administrators viewed the relationship of reentry students

to the institution. The students at the University of Florida used negative terms in their descriptions of their relationship to the institution and in some cases were bitter. One student said "I don't think it has a relationship with me. I don't think they know I exist."

In contrast, the University of Georgia was described as having a generally positive relationship with its reentry students by most of the reentry students who were interviewed, and the responses of the administrators at this institution were consistent with those of the students in describing the relationship in positive terms. There is no indication from the information gathered that explains this difference from the University of Florida. However, there was a common factor for those individuals who expressed positive experiences. Those individuals at both institutions who considered the relationship to be positive had developed personal relationships with individual faculty members or their academic departments. Some of those individual stated that they were in departments that "really cared" while other individuals stated that they took the initiative to seek out these personal relationships. This may be an indication that the size of the institution is a factor in the poor relationships to its reentry students and that there is a need to break down the large public university into smaller communities to allow for meaningful relationships to develop between students and the institution.

Administrators

The administrators interviewed described the broader context of an institution as providing multiple services and opportunities to learn. The degree programs available, the teaching of various subject matter, and extracurricular experiences were believed to provide significant opportunities for reentry students to develop lifelong learning skills. One administrator stated that this was an "intangible" of the classroom experience.

There was no dedicated effort to aid in the development of lifelong learning skills at these institutions except on the part of the continuing education divisions. However, the relationships of the continuing education programs to the degree granting colleges within the university were not strong and they were not used in significant numbers by the students enrolled at the university. The focus of learning was once again on the subject matter and not on the manner or long term value of learning for the individual.

The relationship between reentry students and the University of Florida was described more favorably by the administrators than by the reentry students themselves. While both groups acknowledged that the size of the institution caused the institution to be rather impersonal, this was viewed by administrators as just an unfortunate circumstance. The difference in perception was not as critical at the University of Georgia as the reentry students enrolled there felt they had a generally positive

relationship with the university. It appears that this is an area in which administrators should assess the degree of this problem and provide some direction for both faculty and reentry students in improving this relationship. It is possible that they could be influential in fostering a caring environment at departmental and college levels.

#### Alternative Learning Environments

Kolb believed that reentry students would benefit from learning experiences directly tied to their experiences as adults through the use of internships, co-op work programs, work study, independent study, and external degree programs. He also stated that the faculty in the traditional classroom should offer methods that combine work and study with theory and practice to enhance the learning experience.

#### Reentry students

The students interviewed were generally aware of the various experiential programs at their institution such as co-op work programs, internships, work study, and independent study. The one exception was knowledge of an external degree program. However, none of those interviewed used any of the programs as alternatives to their degree program. Students who participated in internships were in settings where internships have traditionally been used such as education or pharmacy, while those who utilized

independent study were using it more for the convenience and flexibility than as an alternate learning method.

The students perceived little flexibility in the scheduling of classes or variability of the curriculum and found this to be restrictive. All of those interviewed described the traditional lecture as the primary method of teaching and some of them were very uncomplimentary of this. Several students expressed a desire for more simulations, case studies, and group discussion in their classes whenever possible, acknowledging that some subject matter as well as the size of some classes was better suited to the lecture format. In general, reentry students expressed a desire to be more involved with their learning through interaction with the instructor and having the opportunity in class to apply what they were learning. This seems to verify what Kolb has theorized about the relationship of experience to learning. The students were interested in experiential programs only when required as part of the curriculum or for financial renumeration. Some stated that these types of programs were too restrictive in that they delayed graduation and did not add appreciably to the experience that the reentry students already had.

Administrators

Administrators acknowledged that no academic programs on their campuses were designed for reentry students and that any experiential learning in the classroom was

individually designed and implemented by members of the faculty. It is doubtful that those faculty members who varied from the traditional lecture were attempting to address different learning styles of adults or traditional students but, instead, just trying something new on their own. Like the students, the administrators stated that subject matter and size of class were factors that tended to dictate the method of instruction more than any other factor.

There was general acknowledgement that in this area the large public university is very much a traditionally oriented institution serving traditional age students. It is clear from the statements of the administrators that there are alternative learning experiences available to students at their institutions but they are generally designed for traditional age students. The possibility that either evening courses are offered or alternative learning experiences that would help reentry students are available appears to be accidental on the part of the institution. Only individuals serving as faculty and staff, who may have an interest in this population, are actually planning to serve reentry students.

Selection and Evaluation of Students and Faculty

Kolb suggested that there should be flexible admissions and residency requirements, the granting of credit for prior learning, and an understanding by the faculty of the

diversity of various learning styles to best meet the needs of reentry students at a university. This was not the case at the two universities surveyed for this study as expressed by both reentry students and administrators.

Reentry students

Reentry students have little knowledge of the admission requirements of students and faculty. They were aware of the use of prior academic success and standardized test scores as a basic method of evaluation prior to admission but only a few of those individuals surveyed were aware of any special considerations available to them at their institutions.

Credit at both institutions was available through CLEP, Advanced Placement, and course challenge exams, but no credit was awarded for prior work experience. The students at the University of Georgia were more aware of these opportunities to gain credit than their counterparts at the University of Florida but neither group used these methods to any significant degree. One student at the University of Florida stated that credit earned in this manner was a liability because these credits counted toward academic progress but did not meet certain criteria used by colleges to satisfy admission prerequisites.

The faculty and staff were perceived as understanding of the differences between reentry and traditional age students by the reentry students in the survey. However,

they did not believe that different learning styles were addressed at the institution except as a by-product of individual teaching styles. In general, the faculty was described by reentry students as being indifferent to the learning styles of reentry students and that no institutional direction was evident in this area. The students, while acknowledging this inflexibility on the part of the institution, expressed a desire for more than the traditional 1-hour lecture and an expectation of a variety of opportunities as theorized by Kolb.

Administrators

As was noted earlier, both of these institutions were large, land grant universities with strong research functions. They both had admission standards based on standardized test scores and previous academic progress that restricted access to only the most academically competent students. In practice, those actually admitted greatly exceeded the minimum requirements except for select groups that the institutions recruited such as minorities, athletes, and musicians.

The two institutions took different approaches to allow the special admission of lesser qualified individuals but in neither case was the approach directed toward reentry students. Students were able to take advantage of a university petition process at the University of Florida which responded on a case by case basis for all students who

did not meet admission criteria. The University of Georgia provided a credit program in the evening through which students could take general education requirements and if successful gain admission to a degree program which operated only during the day. One of the benefits of this method was that if a reentry student entered the university in this manner, they were not required to take a standardized test prior to admission. However, there was no significant flexibility in the residency requirement at either institution. In a similar example of inflexible restrictions, the University of Georgia still required six quarter hours of physical education credit. This was seen as a hardship by reentry students and an unreasonable requirement given their circumstances.

Both institutions were elitist in their philosophy of admission of new students and the teaching methods relied upon by the majority of instructors. To the administrators, the faculty and staff were perceived as understanding of the differences between reentry and traditional age students. However, similar to the students who were interviewed, they did not believe that different learning styles were addressed at the institution except as a by-product of individual teaching styles. In general, the faculty was described as indifferent to the learning style of reentry students and that the institution did not provide direction for its faculty.

There was a general belief by the administrators that students must adapt to the institution or they will not be able to survive academically. They also believed that the institution was not going to change significantly from this posture.

Social Networks Outside of Class

Institutions should support opportunities for reentry students to interact socially and through student activities, and provide opportunities for dialogue across age levels in a social context according to Kolb. There was an agreement between the reentry students and administrators in the availability of opportunity but a market difference between the two groups in the perception of the value of these opportunities.

Reentry students

One of the common areas where students and administrators agreed was that there were numerous opportunities for social interaction through social activities and student organizations available on campus. Each institution had over 300 student-run organizations operating on their campus and both supported a support group specifically for reentry students called SOTA. Students were aware of these social opportunities and acknowledged that they could participate if they cared to. However, many

of the reentry students expressed that either they did not desire social contacts with other students or they were uncomfortable being a minority amongst the younger students at these activities. For these reasons there is little dialogue across age levels in a social context as theorized by Kolb despite the significant opportunities at large public institutions.

Many of the reentry students chose not to become involved in these social activities. They were involved instead in their academic studies, family commitments, and gainful employment which restricts their opportunities to take part in social activities. Additionally, many reentry students viewed traditional age students as being less serious with their academic pursuits and saw the faculty and graduate students as the peer group with whom they, as reentry students, would rather associate. The mechanism is available for dialogue across age levels at public universities and in large numbers, but the reentry student population studied was not as interested in this area of integration as Kolb theorized.

#### Administrators

The administrators at both institutions identified their numerous student-run organizations and SOTA organization as evidence of social opportunities for reentry students. The administrators did not acknowledge that there was discomfort or avoidance of social contact between

reentry students and traditional students and believed that they had provided the appropriate opportunities for social interaction. They believed that it is the responsibility of the students to choose to participate in existing programs or generate their own social opportunities.

#### Campus Atmosphere

Kolb believed that an institution should express an acceptance of the diverse nature of the student population and accept reentry students as part of the student population. The perceptions of the reentry students and administrators seemed to indicate that there is an acknowledgement of the diversity of the student population at large public universities but probably not an acceptance.

#### Reentry students

The students at the institutions in this study wanted their university to acknowledge them as a unique population with unique needs. The students at the University of Florida did not feel as positive about the relationship between students and the university as those at the University of Georgia, and both groups generally believed that they were lost in a larger crowd of traditional age students. As stated in an earlier part of this chapter,

most students who were satisfied with their institution when surveyed had developed personal relationships and support groups. This appears to be a key issue for satisfaction of reentry students at large public universities.

Students at both institutions expressed similar needs for services but many students at the University of Georgia stated that they were satisfied with the status quo. This was not the case with students at the University of Florida and there were many specific programs they thought would improve the institution to meet their needs.

Administrators

The administrators at the two large public universities tended to view all students as being the same. The administrators expressed no knowledge of the discomfort of some of the reentry students with their institution and the dissatisfaction they express about their learning experiences. They identified the emphasis in responding to the needs of reentry students in general areas rather than through specific services. Rather than unique programs for reentry students, they suggested modifications of existing services to assist reentry students' ability to survive in the existing environment. In this context, the students and administrators had dramatically different views.

Needs Identified by Reentry Students

Using the criteria identified by Kolb, the responses of the reentry students at the two large public universities were placed in the six categories that he used to describe the context of the institution. The responses were compared to these themes and based on the judgment of the researcher, restated as areas of need for reentry.

Structure of the Institution

1. Reentry students want to be integrated into the traditional population of the institution and its academic programs. However, they also expressed a need for supplemental programs designated for them as a unique population. These programs would be academically oriented and would support them in academic skill development, academic advising, and subject matter content.

2. Reentry students want to focus their learning experiences on their chosen professional area. They view all academic experience in relation to their future role as a professional and desire relevant learning experiences regardless of the subject matter.

Mission and Philosophy of Education

3. Reentry students at large public universities are seeking an academic degree in a particular discipline and

view the development of lifelong learning as a secondary concern.

4. Reentry students desire to be recognized as unique individuals who approach their education differently than traditional age students. They want both the university as an institution, as well as the individual faculty, to respond to them as adults with non-academic responsibilities and, when necessary, adjust the various rules and requirements with respect to these issues.

#### Alternative Learning Environments

5. Reentry students at large public universities want learning experiences that combine classroom learning with practical experience that they have acquired prior to returning to higher education. To accomplish this, they prefer small classes that allow interaction between students and faculty, and instructors who use a variety of teaching methods that encourage practical application of the subject matter. They do not desire separate programs that take them away from the classroom to a work setting and delay the completion of their academic program.

#### Selection and Evaluation of Students and Faculty

6. Reentry students want enough flexibility in the admission and residency requirements of an institution to

admit them as nontraditional students using modified criteria.

7. Reentry students want institutions to offer an opportunity to account in some manner for the life experiences they have acquired prior to returning to higher education.

8. Reentry students need individual relationships with faculty members who understand that they have unique needs that may run contrary to the classroom such as employment, family commitments, and personal health.

Social Networks Outside of Class

9. Reentry students need an opportunity to meet other students like themselves but are not interested in social contacts with traditional age students outside the classroom.

Campus Atmosphere

10. Reentry students want to be admitted to the regular academic program of the university but at the same time be identified as a unique population in need of specialized information and services in the areas of academic support and tutoring, orientation to the university, family services, child care, and academic advising.

Needs Identified by Administrators

Using the criteria identified by Kolb, the responses of the administrators at the two large public universities were placed in the six categories that he used to describe the context of the institution. The responses were compared to these themes and, based on the judgment of the researcher, restated as areas of need for reentry by students.

Structure of the Institution

1. Administrators believe that institutions should integrate reentry students into the general population of a university but they do not acknowledge the difference between reentry students and traditional age students except on an individual basis.

2. Administrators believe that the focus of learning should be on the liberal arts curriculum during the first two years of study which they believe requires the use of multiple perspectives of learning.

Mission and Philosophy of Education

3. Administrators believe that all university level academic programs foster the development of lifelong learning skills in students as a consequence of normal academic progress.

4. Administrators do not believe that the university is able to address a diverse student population across age

levels except on an individual basis of student to staff or student to faculty.

Alternative Learning Environments

5. Administrators believe institutions should offer a variety of programs to combine experience with academic degree programs but do not identify them specifically for reentry students.

6. Administrators are restricted by factors they cannot control affecting class size and physical facilities that inhibit the introduction of alternative teaching methods and subsequently are unable to address certain academic concerns.

Selection and Evaluation of Students and Faculty

7. Administrators believe that universities should provide individual and institutional responses that allow students with deficient credentials to gain access to an institution. However, administrators do not believe in offering flexibility in curricular or residency requirements unless the program is suffering from lower enrollment and is actively seeking students to maintain funding levels.

8. Administrators believe that students should be able to receive credit for prior academic learning through transfer of academic credit, CLEP, Advanced Placement, and course challenge by examination. They do not believe an

institution should grant academic credit for prior life experience.

9. Administrators believe that at large public universities, faculty rely primarily on the traditional lecture as a method of instruction and any attempt to address the diverse learning styles of reentry students should be done on the part of an individual instructor when and if the circumstances allow.

Social Networks Outside of Class

10. Administrators offer a laissez faire mechanism for students to interact socially and organize into social groups by common interests. Interest for these groups is generated from self-identified need by members of the student population.

Campus Atmosphere

11. Administrators believe that large public universities should not differentiate between reentry students and traditional age students. Instead, they respond to the needs of any population if there is a demand on the part of a specific group. In the case of reentry students, they believe reentry students need specialized services and information through academic advising, transition to life as a student during orientation, flexible

academic requirements and course offerings, and family services.

Summary

This chapter described the data collected through the individual interviews at the Universities of Florida and Georgia and detailed them within the context of an institution as outlined by Kolb. The data were then discussed as it applied to the six major themes identified by Kolb that comprise the context of an institution. The discussion elaborated the similarities and differences between students' and administrators' responses. The final part of this chapter was a listing of the needs of reentry students at large public universities as identified by reentry students and administrators at those institutions placed within the six major themes outlined by Kolb.

Chapter V provides a summary of the first three chapters of the dissertation and the findings listed in Chapter IV. It also includes the conclusions that can be drawn from the study and recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER V SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The changes in the population of the United States as the baby boom generation reaches middle age has begun to affect higher education. There are increasing numbers of students reentering higher education while fewer traditional age students are available for enrollment immediately after they complete high school. These population trends coupled with the rate of technological advances in our society have caused societal changes that result in career obsolescence, mandatory continuing education, longer life expectancies, rising educational levels, and an increasing acceptance by society of nontraditional forms of learning. In this environment, adults must become lifelong learners if they intend to maintain an active role in society and contribute to the work force. From the perspective of institutions of higher education, it may be critical to their survival that they respond to this increasing segment of the population identified as adult learners. Institutions are caught between the forces that have caused the reality of a dwindling number of traditional age students, and the needs of adults who reenter colleges looking for opportunities to enhance their skills, career opportunities,

and understanding of the rapidly changing world in which they live.

In Chapter II of this study, the concepts and theories of adult development were discussed as they pertained to reentry to higher education. This was followed by a review of relevant research that identified specific program needs of reentry students at institutions of higher education. These identified services focused on human service needs and did not address the academic needs of reentry students. The discussion that followed provided information concerning learning style, strategies for addressing academic needs, and the relationship of experience and learning. To understand better this relationship, Kolb's theory of experiential learning was outlined and applied to reentry students. This experiential learning theory provides an interface for adult development theory and the learning process and can be used as a basis for understanding reentry students and responding to their needs. According to Kolb, reentry students, due to their age and the effect of age on their learning styles, seek an increased integration of learning and experience. Using Kolb's theory it becomes possible to establish a direction for an institution as a provider of learning experiences and services for returning adults.

Kolb's theory of experiential learning posits six areas of concern for integration of learning to occur for adults. The institution through its university structure, mission

and philosophy of education, alternative learning environments, selection and evaluation criteria for faculty and students, social networks outside of classes, and campus atmosphere must acknowledge that reentry students need to be served with an understanding of the developmental issues they bring to campus. Reentry students and administrators were interviewed by telephone at the University of Florida and the University of Georgia using open ended questions that addressed the six areas identified by Kolb with the intent of comparing Kolb's theory with the stated needs of reentry students and administrators at large public universities. The information gathered in these interviews was then compiled and organized around the six central themes identified by Kolb and a list of needs of reentry students as identified by administrators and students was generated as a final outcome of the study.

#### Summary of Needs for Reentry

The information gathered in this study was organized into statements that addressed the needs of reentry students from the perspective of both reentry students and administrators. For comparative purposes these broad statements were placed within the context of the six areas of concern that were identified by Kolb as being necessary for integrated learning to occur.

Needs Identified by Reentry Students

Reentry students were generally able to agree with Kolb in desiring an integrated learning experience. However, they expressed a desire to focus on their professional role when learning and were relatively uninterested in social contacts with traditional age students.

Structure of the institution

1. Reentry students want to be integrated into the traditional population of the institution and its academic programs. However, they have also expressed a need for supplemental programs designated for them as a unique population. These programs would be academically oriented and would support them in academic skill development, academic advising, and subject matter content.

2. Reentry students want to focus their learning experiences on their chosen professional area. They view all academic experience in relation to their future role as a professional and desire relevant learning experiences regardless of the subject matter.

Mission and philosophy of education

3. Reentry students at large public universities are seeking an academic degree in a particular discipline and

view the development of lifelong learning skills as a secondary concern.

4. Reentry students desire to be recognized as unique individuals who approach their education differently than traditional age students. They want both the university as an institution as well as the individual faculty to respond to them as adults with non-academic responsibilities, and when necessary adjust the various rules and requirements with respect to these issues.

Alternative learning environments

5. Reentry students at large public universities want learning experiences that combine classroom learning with practical experience that they have acquired prior to returning to higher education. To accomplish this, they prefer small classes that allow interaction between students and faculty and instructors who use a variety of teaching methods that encourage practical application of the subject matter. They do not desire separate programs that take them away from the classroom to a work setting and delay the completion of their academic program.

Selection and evaluation of students and faculty

6. Reentry students want enough flexibility in the admission and residency requirements of an institution to

admit them as nontraditional students using modified criteria.

7. Reentry students want institutions to offer an opportunity to account in some manner for the life experiences they acquired prior to returning to higher education.

8. Reentry students need individual relationships with faculty members who understand that they have unique needs that may run contrary to the classroom such as employment, family commitments, and personal health.

Social networks outside of class

9. Reentry students need an opportunity to meet other students like themselves but are not interested in social contacts with traditional age students outside the classroom.

Campus atmosphere

10. Reentry students want to be admitted to the regular academic program of the university but at the same time be identified as a unique population in need of specialized information and services in the areas of academic support and tutoring, orientation to the university, family services including child care, and academic advising.

Needs Identified by Administrators

Administrators attempt to integrate reentry students into the general population of the large public university and respond to problems on an individual basis. They are unaware of the desire of reentry students for career oriented learning and believe that the liberal arts curriculum is the most appropriate vehicle for learning. Within the social context of the student population they expect reentry students to integrate with the traditional age population while offering specialized social groups for reentry students to meet peers.

Structure of the institution

1. Administrators believe that institutions should integrate reentry students into the general population of a university but they do not acknowledge the difference between reentry students and traditional age students except on an individual basis.
2. Administrators believe that the focus of learning should be on the liberal arts curriculum during the first two years of study which they believe requires the use of multiple perspectives of learning.

Mission and philosophy of education

3. Administrators believe that all university level academic programs foster the development of lifelong

learning skills in students as a consequence of normal academic progress.

4. Administrators do not believe that the university is able to address a diverse student population across age levels except on an individual basis of student to staff or student to faculty.

Alternative learning environments

5. Administrators believe that universities offer a variety of programs to combine experience with academic degree programs but do not identify them specifically for reentry students.

6. Administrators are restricted by factors they cannot control affecting class size and physical facilities that inhibit the introduction of alternative teaching methods and subsequently are unable to address certain academic concerns.

Selection and evaluation of students and faculty

7. Administrators believe that universities should provide individual and institutional responses that allow students with deficient credentials to gain access to an institution. However, administrators do not believe in offering flexibility in curricular or residency requirements unless the program is suffering from lower enrollment and is actively seeking students to maintain funding levels.

8. Administrators believe that students should be able to receive credit for prior academic learning through transfer of academic credit, CLEP, Advanced Placement, and course challenge by examination. They do not believe an institution should grant academic credit for prior life experience.

9. Administrators believe that at large public universities, faculty rely primarily on the traditional lecture as a method of instruction and any attempt to address the diverse learning styles of reentry students is done on the part of an individual instructor when and if the circumstances allow.

Social networks outside of class

10. Administrators offer a laissez faire mechanism for students to interact socially and organize into social groups by common interests. Interest for these groups is generated from self-identified needs by members of the student population.

Campus atmosphere

11. Administrators believe that large public universities do not differentiate between reentry students and traditional age students. Instead, they respond to the needs of any population if there is a demand on the part of a specific group. In the case of reentry students, they

believe reentry students need specialized services and information through academic advising, transition to life as a student during orientation, flexible academic requirements, course offerings, and family services.

### Conclusions

Reentry students express a strong need to be accepted into the university environment as degree seeking students while utilizing the integrated learning experiences identified by Kolb. However, when seeking learning experiences, they organize their learning around the role of the professional in their field of study. There is little interest in the broad curriculum of liberal education or using lifelong learning as focal points for learning as theorized by Kolb unless the learning experiences can be directly applied to the professional roles the students are seeking to acquire.

Learning experiences that delay progress towards a degree are seen as a waste of time or resources by reentry students. They perceive time as an increasingly limited commodity and are not willing to spend it on what they believe to be irrelevant experiences for them as individuals. This also applies to learning experiences that inhibit their ability to meet their financial obligations while they are seeking a degree or, in their opinion, needlessly add experiential components to a degree program if they already have relevant experience prior to reentry.

Unpaid internships and practica can cause one or both of these sorts of problems for many reentry students. Co-ops cause a different type of problem in that they are enticing financially and experientially for the reentry students but they tend to lengthen a degree program and are perceived as a delay to graduation. With limited time as an issue there is a conflict between the desire to complete a degree as quickly as possible and the meaningful experience gained in a professional work setting. Given these two choices, it is more important for reentry students to complete their degree as quickly as possible. Administrators do not acknowledge this conflict and believe that the experiential learning components of their degree programs are applicable to all students. They also believe, with Kolb, that lifelong learning and liberal education should be focal points for reentry students and do not see the role of the professional as being an important issue with students at their university.

Reentry students are not interested in social contacts across age levels as theorized by Kolb. In actuality, many reentry students are not interested in any extra social contacts due to financial constraints and family commitments that limit the time available for extra social activities. They are more tolerant of contact across age levels within the classroom and believe that as reentry students they should be integrated into the classroom with traditional age students. However, even in the academic setting, they would

prefer any specialized services offered by the institution to be segregated by age. They believe that reentry students have some unique academic needs that are better addressed when they are served as a distinct population.

Administrators, conversely, offer what can best be described as "generic" social opportunities and let the students in attendance at their institution dictate the types of social opportunities available by their expressed interests. There is no perception by the administrators of the awkwardness of this format of social interaction for reentry students. In the academic setting, however, administrators are more sensitive to the differences between reentry and traditional age students and believe that an institution should offer individualized help addressed specifically to reentry students in the form of academic advising and counseling.

Despite these differences, which can be substantial in the daily experience of reentry students, there is a general agreement with Kolb by reentry students and administrators as to the needs of reentry students at large public universities. An important difference between those needs as expressed by reentry students and those identified by administrators is that the students vacillate between the desire to be integrated into the institution and the desire to receive specialized attention as a unique population. The administrators, on the other hand, tend to integrate reentry students into the mainstream of the student

population and leave them there unless a specific need is made evident to them.

Large public universities have the resources at their disposal to be responsive to the needs of reentry students. However, the philosophy of learning at these large public universities is based on serving traditional age students and there is only limited or sporadic acknowledgement of the needs of reentry students. These responses take the form of either individual interest on the part of a faculty member or programs that are modified versions of successful programs for traditional age students. Instead of planning to serve reentry students in an organized manner, the large public universities are requiring them to adapt to existing services which were originally designed for traditional age students. The responses by individual faculty and staff are well meaning and appreciated by the students enrolled, but the lack of a centralized office to coordinate the services restricts the effectiveness of the available programs.

#### Recommendations

Large public universities that acknowledge the existence of reentry students at their institution should attempt to provide services that conform to the need statements identified previously. Within the context of each institution, specific programs and services should be designed through a coordinated effort of the institution to eliminate the duplication and waste of limited resources.

There are areas of disagreement between administrators and reentry students concerning which specific services and programs are actually needed to adequately serve reentry students. These differences must be addressed by the administrators of each institution just as they have addressed the needs of other minority populations on their campuses in the past. They have acknowledged the differences between the various segments of the student population, allocated available resources, and coordinated the development of programs and services to address identified needs.

Specific programs and services for reentry students that should be provided at a large public university include the following:

1. A centralized office that coordinates existing services of the institution to provide leadership in identifying the needs of reentry students and design appropriate institutional responses.
2. An orientation program that specifically serves reentry students and their schedules as affected by jobs, families, and community responsibilities.
3. A varied and flexible schedule of courses that allows individuals to have full-time employment while enrolled at the institution.
4. The existence of a social/support group designed specifically to serve reentry students.

5. Academic advisors who are sensitive to the needs of reentry students and adults in general.

6. A designated staff member with university wide responsibilities who effectively serves as an ombudsman for reentry students and their concerns.

Areas for Further Study

The students who participated in this study had already been admitted into degree granting programs and were presently attending classes at a large public university. These individuals had been able to overcome any barriers to reentry that were placed before them by either the institution or personal circumstances. However, this study did not attempt to determine the rationale or reasoning used by students who chose to attend these large public universities which are designed to serve traditional age students. To understand better the reasons that reentry students enter large public universities and the forces that affect them prior to admission, it would be helpful to study the entire applicant pool of reentry students at these institutions. This study could include those individuals who were not admitted to the university as well as those individuals who did not enroll after having been admitted to determine if there are specific criteria that can be used to identify reentry students who attend large public universities.

Another area of study that could provide valuable information to administrators at institutions of higher education is a comparison of the reentry students and administrators at large public universities with the reentry students and administrators at public universities in urban settings. Many of the large public universities tend to be in relatively sparsely populated areas which may have a significant impact on the type of reentry students who are able to enroll in degree granting programs. The reentry students attending a public university in an urban setting may identify different areas of need when compared to reentry students in more traditional settings.

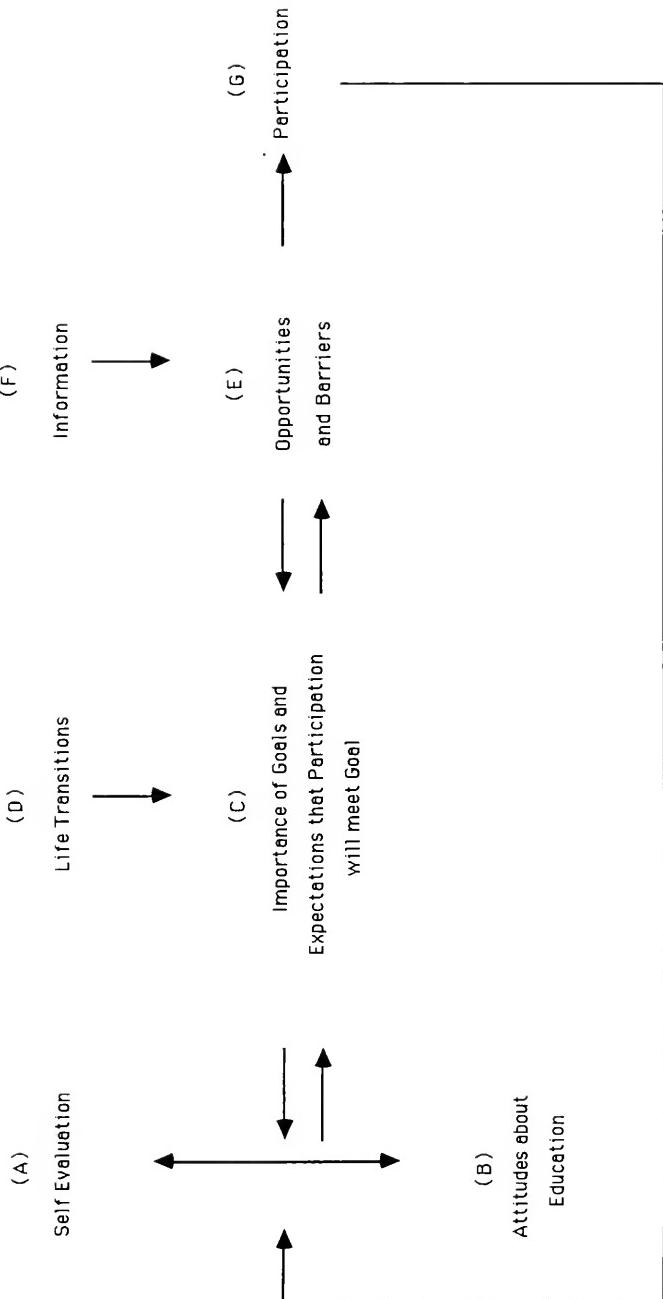
Additionally, the perception of those needs as identified by administrators in an urban setting may result in different services being made available to serve reentry students especially if they comprise a significant percentage of the student population at an urban institution.

#### Summary

Reentry students in attendance at large public universities have distinct needs from a traditional university population that are not being met by a coordinated plan of the institution. Students who enter higher education are able to survive at these institutions because there are concerned administrators and faculty who are sensitive to the distinction between traditional and reentry students and because they use their own initiative

to seek solutions to their individual problems. Kolb's theory of experiential learning offers a direction for institutions when planning services and programs and can be used as a general series of guidelines to design programs to serve reentry students. However, reentry students place more emphasis on the relationship of their learning experiences in the classroom to their role as a professional and less emphasis on social contacts with traditional age students than Kolb has suggested. With the increasing numbers of students reentering higher education, administrators and faculty members at large public universities must acquaint themselves with the needs of reentry students if they are to adequately provide services to them as students with specific concerns that need individual attention.

APPENDIX A  
CHAIN OF RESPONSE MODEL



APPENDIX B  
DEVELOPMENT CONCERNs OF ADULTS

Traditional College Age  
(17-25)

Choosing and preparing for a career  
Managing personal finances  
Coping with roommate conflicts  
Developing acceptance of body  
Dealing with authority  
Finding a job  
Controlling substance use  
Breaking away from parents  
Controlling emotions  
Developing identity  
Choosing a mate

Older Adult Students  
(25-55)

Updating job skills  
Changing jobs  
Coping with stress and anxiety  
Choosing a new career  
Returning to work  
Returning to school  
Managing home and family responsibilities  
Handling relocation  
Coping with death  
Coping with retirement  
Coping with changed time perspective and awareness of limited time  
Coping with stress and anxiety  
Confronting a sense of mortality  
Coping with changing parental roles  
Coping with changing spousal roles  
Coping with marital conflict  
Coping with family conflict  
Developing acceptance of changing appearance  
Weight control  
Dealing with dual career marriages  
Dealing with being a single parent  
Managing coparenting  
Dealing with living alone  
Dealing with aging parents  
Dealing with illness (self and others)  
Dealing with age or sex discrimination

APPENDIX C  
SUMMARY OF NEEDS, PROGRAMS, AND SERVICES

1. Orientation for family of students: (Carbone, 1982; Cross, 1981)
2. Flex time scheduling for faculty/staff: (Carbone, 1982; Cross, 1981)
3. Provision of literature about adults for faculty/staff: (Carbone, 1982)
4. Flexible class scheduling: (Carbone, 1982; Cross, 1981)
5. Conference on adult learners: (Carbone, 1982)
6. Continuing Education for faculty: (Carbone, 1982)
7. Workshops/courses on aging: (Merriam, 1976)
8. Workshops on sexuality: (Merriam, 1976)
9. Assistance with career development issues: (Frye, 1980; Merriam, 1976)
10. Outreach to the community from the institution: (Flohr & Sweeney, 1982)
11. Grouping reentry students together: (Reinfeld, 1975)
12. Programs designed for women: (Fisher-Thompson & Kuhn, 1981)
13. Elderhostel: (Kaplan, 1981)
14. Continuing education: (Bulpitt, 1973)
15. Academic skill building: (Bulpitt, 1973)
16. Orientation seminar: (Candy, 1981; Creamer & Akins, 1981; Galerstein, 1977; Hendrix & Stoel, 1982; Kegel, 1977; Lance, Lourie, & Mayo, 1979; Rawlins, 1979; Rawlins & Davies, 1981; Roach, 1976; Sherer, Herrig, & Noel, 1976)
17. Relationship of Job/Career/Placement to education: (Blaze & Nero, 1979; Boyer, 1979; Corrado & Mangano, 1982; Creamer & Akins, 1981; Courtney & Wozniak, 1978; DiSilvestro, 1978; Flohr & Sweeney, 1982; Kasworm, 1980; Lance, Lourie, & Mayo, 1979; Malin et al., 1980; Merriam, 1976; O'Toole, 1974; Rawlins & Davies, 1981; Saslaw, 1981; Sharp & Sosdian, 1979; Valley, 1979; Wintersteen, 1982)
18. Outreach for prospective students: (Apt, 1978; Bowen, 1980; Chambers, 1980; Demko, 1979; Galerstein, 1977; Hall, 1980; Hodgkinson, 1976; Saslaw, 1981; Sherer, Herrig, & Noel, 1978; Wintersteen, 1982)
19. Provide flexible admission policies: (Bowen, 1980; Demko, 1979; Fauquet, 1983; Frye, 1980; Powell, 1980; Rawlins, 1979; Saslaw, 1981)
20. Provide flexible residency requirements: (Bowen, 1980; Frye, 1980; Hall, 1980; Powell, 1980; Saslaw, 1981)

21. Provide flexible scheduling of courses offered: (Blaze & Nero, 1979; Bowen, 1980; Boyer, 1974; Hall, 1980; Hodgkinson, 1976; Malin et al., 1980; Powell, 1980; Saslaw, 1981; Sherer, Herrig, & Noel, 1976)
22. Provide instruction tailored for adults: (Bowen, 1980; Blaze & Nero, 1979; Corrado & Mangano, 1982; Frye, 1980; Saslaw, 1981; Sherer, Herrig, & Noel, 1976; Troup, 1980)
23. Have similar fee structures to traditional students: (Bowen, 1980; Courtney & Wozniak, 1978)
24. Elimination of barriers to reentry: (Bowen, 1980; Cross, 1981)
25. Low tuition and fees: (Bowen, 1980)
26. Provide adult program of equal quality to traditional curriculum: (Bowen, 1980; Courtney & Wozniak, 1978; Frye, 1980; Galerstein, 1977; Hodgkinson, 1976; Wintersteen, 1982)
27. Provide an external degree: (Blaze & Nero, 1979; Hall, 1980; Sharp & Sosdian, 1979)
28. Provide programs on coping with family and home responsibilities: (Creamer & Akins, 1981; Malin et al., 1980; Merriam, 1976; Saslaw, 1981)
29. Provide programs on coping with age related issues: (Boyer, 1974; Creamer & Akins, 1981; Merriam, 1976)
30. Provide programs on coping with stress and anxiety: (Creamer & Akins, 1981; Merriam, 1976)
31. Provide programs on single parenting: (Creamer & Akins, 1981)
32. Provide programs on improving human relation skills: (DiSilvestro, 1978)
33. Provide opportunity to develop lifelong learning skills: (Beder, 1978; Boyer, 1974; Cross, 1979; Lenz, 1982; Tarule & Weathersby, 1979; Tough, 1981; Whitesage, 1979)
34. Provide opportunity for personal contact with institution: (Apt, 1978; Olski, 1980; Rawlins, 1979; Roach, 1976)
35. Provide support for basic skill development: (Courtney & Wozniak, 1978; Hall, 1980; Lance, Lourie, & Mayo, 1979; MacPike, 1981; Saslaw, 1981; Suddick & Vaccaro, 1983)
36. Provide support for personal growth regarding adult development: (Brundage, 1980; Courtney & Wozniak, 1978; Lance, Lourie, & Mayo, 1979; MacPike, 1981; Mangano, 1976; Sherer, Herrig, & Noel, 1976; Tarule & Weathersby, 1979; Weathersby, 1976)
37. Foster a sense of belonging: (MacPike, 1981; Rawlins, 1979)
38. Program in accordance with developmental tasks: (Demko, 1979; Flohr & Sweeney, 1982; Merriam, 1976; Olski, 1980; Rawlins & Davies, 1981; Rossman & Bunning, 1978)
39. Provide evening programs: (Hall, 1980)
40. Provide summer programs: (Hall, 1980)

41. Provide a Weekend College: (Hall, 1980)
42. Provide Cooperative learning experiences: (Hall, 1980)
43. Provide internships: (Hall, 1980)
44. Provide for independent/self-directed study: (Blaze & Nero, 1979; Galerstein, 1977; Hodgkinson, 1976)
45. Provide competency based education: (Blaze & Nero, 1979)
46. Provide credit for prior learning: (Billingham & Travagliani, 1981; Blaze & Nero, 1979; Cross, 1981; Galerstein, 1977; Prager, 1983; Saslaw, 1981; Sherer, Herrig, & Noel, 1978; Wintersteen, 1982; Zeik, 1980)
47. Offer an adult center with a program staff: (Corrado & Mangano, 1982; Flohr & Sweeney, 1982; Frye, 1980; Karwin, 1973; Lance, Lourie, & Mayo, 1979; Rawlins, 1979; Sherer, Herrig, & Noel, 1978; Wintersteen, 1982)
48. Have flexible registration procedures: (Corrado & Mangano, 1982; Frye, 1980; Kegel, 1977)
49. Provide counseling tailored to adults: (Galerstein, 1977; Kasworm, 1980; Kegel, 1977; Knox, 1979; Lance, Lourie, & Mayo, 1979; Rawlins & Davies, 1981; Roach, 1976; Saslaw, 1981; Sherer, Herrig, & Noel, 1978)
50. Provide opportunities for peer support and social interaction: (Corrado & Magnano, 1982; Courtney & Wozniak, 1978; Creange, 1980; Galerstein, 1977; Hall, 1980; Hunt & Stone, 1979; Plotsky, 1976; Rawlins, 1979; Roach, 1976; Sherer, Herrig, & Noel, 1978; Valley, 1979; Wintersteen, 1982)
51. Offer credit by exam or CLEP: (Cross, 1981; Galerstein, 1977; Hodgkinson, 1976)
52. Provide financial aid for adults: (Galerstein, 1977; Hall, 1980; Kasworm, 1980; Kegel, 1977; Malin et al., 1980; Rawlins, 1979; Saslaw, 1981; Sherer, Herrig, & Noel, 1978; Valley, 1979)
53. Provide programs to educate faculty regarding adult development: (Carbone, 1982; Corrado & Mangano, 1982; Kegel, 1977; Rawlins, 1979; Roach, 1976; Rossman & Bunning, 1978; Sherer, Herrig, & Noel, 1978)
54. Develop publications and printed information for adults: (Corrado & Mangano, 1982; Kegel, 1977; Lance, Lourie, & Mayo, 1979; Rawlins & Davies, 1981; Wintersteen, 1982)
55. Provide child care services: (Corrado & Mangano, 1982; Hall, 1980; Karwin, 1973; Kegel, 1977; Lance, Lourie, & Mayo, 1979; Rawlins, 1979; Saslaw, 1981)
56. Provide a newsletter for adults: (Kegel, 1977)
57. Provide an information and referal service: (Creange, 1980; Hall, 1980; Rawlins, 1979; Wintersteen, 1982)
58. Provide overnight accommodations: (Rawlins & Davies, 1981)
59. Offer peer counseling: (Corrado & Mangano, 1982; Lance, Lourie, & Mayo, 1979)
60. Provide an exclusive lounge for adults: (Lance, Lourie, & Mayo, 1979)

61. Offer help in locating housing: (Rawlins, 1979; Valley, 1979)
62. Provide academic advising for adults: (Galerstein, 1977; Malin et al., 1980; Rawlins, 1979; Saslaw, 1981)
63. Provide health services: (Creange, 1980; DiSilvestro, 1978; Hall, 1980)
64. Provide admission counseling: (Galerstein, 1977; Rawlins, 1979)
65. Offer safe parking and transportation: (Saslaw, 1981; Creange, 1980; Hall, 1980; Karwin, 1973)
66. Offer housing specifically for adults: (Creange, 1980; Hall, 1980)
67. Provide student employment: (Creange, 1980; Hall, 1980)
68. Offer legal services: (Creange, 1980)
69. Provide food service on campus: (Creange, 1980; Hall, 1980)
70. Offer help with study skills: (Kasworm, 1980)
71. Availability of different teaching/learning environments for different learning styles: (Billingham & Travagliani, 1981; Brundage, 1980; Creamer & Akins, 1981; Kasworm, 1980; Lake, 1980; Lenz, 1982; Lueers, 1983; Smith, 1976; Zeik, 1980)
72. Provide opportunity to improve communication skills: (Rivera, 1978)
73. Provision for review of previously learned skills: (Brundage, 1980; Hendrix & Stoel, 1982; Lenz, 1982; Lueers, 1983; MacPike, 1981; Prager, 1983; Zeik, 1980)
74. Use of Liberal Education as a foundation for curriculum: (Hendrix & Stoel, 1982; O'Toole, 1974)
75. Provide traditional classroom experiences: (Hunter & McCants, 1977)
76. Faculty has knowledge of adult development: (Brundage, 1980; Frye, 1980; Lenz, 1982; Tarule & Weathersby, 1979; Weathersby, 1976)
77. Support services operate in conjunction with academic services: (Lueers, 1983; MacPike, 1981)
78. Offer relevant learning experiences: (Lenz, 1982; Lueers, 1983)
79. Offer learner centered experiences: (Lenz, 1982)
80. Allow for flexibility in policies and procedures: (Rawlins & Davies, 1981)

APPENDIX D  
SURVEY QUESTIONS BASED ON KOLB'S THEORY

### Introduction

My name is Mike Rollo. I'm a research assistant and doctoral student with the Institute of Higher Education at the University of Florida in Gainesville. I am calling you in regard to a study I am doing that focuses on the needs of reentry students at large public universities and how both administrators and students report those needs. This information will be compared to the theories of David Kolb concerning experiential learning and adult development and used to complete my dissertation in Educational Leadership.

I will ask you some questions about the relationship between reentry students and the learning experiences available at your institution. Please answer these questions from your personal experience and your perceptions as a member of the university community. All information gathered in this survey will remain confidential and your responses will be combined with others for purposes of the final report. Your participation in this survey is strictly voluntary. If you do not wish to answer a particular question for any reason, please state your concerns and your wishes will be honored.

For the purposes of this study, reentry students are defined as undergraduates in degree seeking programs who are at least 25 years of age who have had an interruption or delay in completing their academic program at some point prior to their graduation.

#### A. University Structure

1. Describe the new student orientation offered by this university.
2. What kinds of allowances are made to accommodate the unique needs of reentry students in the new student orientation at this university?
3. What type of barriers exist to reentry students at this institution?
4. What are the most important services a university can offer to reentry students?

B. Mission and Philosophy of Education

5. How would you describe the relationship of this university to its reentry student population?
6. Can you describe the program that offers continuing education services at this university and the types of learning experiences available through it?
7. It is believed that reentry students are interested in acquiring lifelong learning skills. In what ways does this institution develop academic skills that can be used by individuals after they have completed their formal studies?
8. Does this institution designate some of its resources to serve reentry students as a distinct student population?

C. Alternative Learning Environments

9. Are classes for academic credit available at a variety of times other than normal working hours on Monday through Friday?
10. What type of programs are offered for combining experience with classroom learning (i.e., co-op, internships, etc.)?
11. What types of alternative degree programs does the university offer (i.e., Bachelor's Degree in Independent Studies)?
12. Some theorists have suggested that a 1-hour lecture in a classroom is not the best way for everyone to learn new material. Can you describe any alternative teaching/learning experiences that are incorporated into the traditional curriculum for those students who have different learning styles (i.e., TV/radio, independent study, internships, etc.)?
13. What types of academic programs at this university are specifically designed for reentry students?

D. Selection and Evaluation of Students and Faculty

14. What criteria are used for admission to this university?
15. In what ways does the university modify admission standards for special admission of reentry students?

16. Describe any process the university uses to award credit for prior learning.
17. There are certain issues that concern reentry students apart from traditional age students. How would you describe the level of understanding of these differences, by the faculty and staff at this institution?

E. Social Networks Outside of Class

18. We have been discussing academic programs up to this point. Now focusing on those programs and services that are not directly related to the academic curriculum, what other types of programs are being offered at your institution to serve reentry students as a unique population?
19. Continuing from the last question, what types of programs and services are presently offered to the general student population that also serve reentry students?
20. What types of programs or services, specifically designated for reentry students, would you like to see offered at your institution?

F. Campus Atmosphere

21. Are reentry students integrated into the classroom with the institution's traditional student population or do they attend classes designed specifically for them?
22. Earlier you commented on this institution's relationship to reentry students. How would you describe the relationship of his institution to students in general?
23. What changes could be made at this institution to improve the educational experience of its reentry students?

APPENDIX E  
STUDENT LETTER

STUDENT NAME  
ADDRESS  
CITY/STATE

Dear STUDENT NAME:

The Institute of Higher Education at the University of Florida is conducting a survey of students who reenter higher education at SCHOOL NAME. This information is being gathered for research purposes with the goal of improving the services and programs for reentry students at large public universities. Approximately 100 students at four different universities are being contacted to participate in this project by way of telephone interviews. Your name has been selected at random from a selected list of undergraduate students at your institution to be a part of this survey.

I will be calling students from SCHOOL NAME during the next two weeks to ask some general questions about being a student at your university. The telephone interview will last approximately 15 to 20 minutes and all information will remain anonymous and confidential. Of course your participation in this survey is strictly voluntary but we hope that you will take a few minutes out of your busy schedule to provide the Institute with some valuable information about being a student at SCHOOL NAME.

Sincerely,

J. Michael Rollo  
Assistant in Research

APPENDIX F  
REPORT OF DATA

The responses to each question in this study were organized around a taxonomy developed by the researcher and reported by type of respondent at each institution. Where noted, the questions generated multiple responses. The following key identifies the terminology used in reporting the data and number of respondents at each institution.

UFA = University of Florida administrators	n=5
UFS = University of Florida students	n=20
UGA = University of Georgia administrators	n=5
UGS = University of Georgia students	n=18

1. Describe the new student orientation offered by this university.
  - a. Summer orientation program

UFA n=5
UFS n=1
UGA n=4
UGS n=0
  - b. Negative comments

UFA n=0
UFS n=5
UGA n=0
UGS n=2
  - c. Short program for new students each term

UFA n=1
UFS n=1
UGA n=0
UGS n=8
  - d. No knowledge

UFA n=0
UFS n=13
UGA n=0
UGS n=8

2. What kinds of allowances are made to accommodate the unique needs of reentry students in the new student orientation at this orientation?
  - a. No allowances  
UFA n=4  
UFS n=5  
UGA n=0  
UGS n=5
  - b. Minimal acknowledgement  
UFA n=1  
UFS n=2  
UGA n=2  
UGS n=2
  - c. Other  
UFA n=0  
UFS n=0  
UGA n=1  
UGS n=3
  - d. No knowledge  
UFA n=0  
UFS n=13  
UGA n=2  
UGS n=7
3. What type of barriers exist to reentry students at this institution?
  - a. No night or weekend course offerings  
UFA n=2  
UFS n=1  
UGA n=0  
UGS n=1
  - b. Campus is not sensitive to reentry students  
UFA n=2  
UFS n=3  
UGA n=2  
UGS n=2
  - c. No barriers exist  
UFA n=2  
UFS n=10  
UGA n=2  
UGS n=12
  - d. Academic issues  
UFA n=0  
UFS n=4  
UGA n=1  
UGS n=1

- e. Other
  - UFA n=2
  - UFS n=2
  - UGA n=0
  - UGS n=3
- 4. What are the most important services a university can offer to reentry students? (Multiple responses were reported.)
  - a. Academic skill support
    - UFA n=2
    - UFS n=1
    - UGA n=1
    - UGS n=1
  - b. Assist reentry students in transition to university life
    - UFA n=1
    - UFS n=4
    - UGA n=3
    - UGS n=2
  - c. Academic advising
    - UFA n=3
    - UFS n=7
    - UGA n=0
    - UGS n=3
  - d. Day care services
    - UFA n=0
    - UFS n=0
    - UGA n=2
    - UGS n=4
  - e. Financial aid
    - UFA n=0
    - UFS n=6
    - UGA n=1
    - UGS n=2
  - f. Other
    - UFA n=4
    - UFS n=3
    - UGA n=3
    - UGS n=5
  - g. No knowledge
    - UFA n=0
    - UFS n=4
    - UGA n=0
    - UGS n=5

5. How would you describe the relationship of this university to its reentry student population?

a. Positive

UFA n=2  
UFS n=8  
UGA n=3  
UGS n=11

b. Negative

UFA n=1  
UFS n=4  
UGA n=3  
UGS n=0

c. Same as traditional age students

UFA n=2  
UFS n=8  
UGA n=2  
UGS n=4

6. Can you describe the program that offers continuing education services at this university and the types of learning experiences available through it?

a. Oriented to lifelong learning

UFA n=4  
UFS n=1  
UGA n=0  
UGS n=0

b. A broad range of credit and non-credit courses

UFA n=0  
UFS n=0  
UGA n=5  
UGS n=7

c. No knowledge

UFA n=1  
UFS n=19  
UGA n=0  
UGS n=11

7. It is believed that reentry students are interested in acquiring lifelong learning skills. In what ways does this institution develop academic skills that can be used by individuals after they have completed their formal studies? (Multiple responses reported.)

a. Extra-curricular activities

UFA n=2  
UFS n=3  
UGA n=0  
UGS n=2

- b. As a by-product of classroom experience
    - UFA n=3
    - UFS n=12
    - UGA n=3
    - UGS n=14
  - c. Other
    - UFA n=0
    - UFS n=4
    - UGA n=2
    - UGS n=0
  - d. No knowledge
    - UFA n=0
    - UFS n=3
    - UGA n=0
    - UGS n=3
8. Does this institution designate some of its resources to serve reentry students as a distinct student population?
- a. No
    - UFA n=2
    - UFS n=5
    - UGA n=2
    - UGS n=0
  - b. Some in student affairs
    - UFA n=3
    - UFS n=4
    - UGA n=3
    - UGS n=4
  - c. No knowledge
    - UFA n=0
    - UFS n=11
    - UGA n=0
    - UGS n=14
9. Are classes for academic credit available at a variety of times other than normal working hours on Monday through Friday?
- a. Mostly weekday classes
    - UFA n=2
    - UFS n=15
    - UGA n=0
    - UGS n=4

- b. Depends on the academic program
    - UFA n=3
    - UFS n=0
    - UGA n=0
    - UGS n=5
  - c. Night classes during weekdays or night and weekend classes
    - UFA n=0
    - UFS n=4
    - UGA n=5
    - UGS n=9
  - d. Other
    - UFA n=0
    - UFS n=1
    - UGA n=0
    - UGS n=0
10. What type of programs are offered for combining experience with classroom learning (i.e., co-op, internships, etc.)? (Multiple responses reported.)
- a. Internships
    - UFA n=3
    - UFS n=5
    - UGA n=4
    - UGS n=7
  - b. Co-ops
    - UFA n=4
    - UFS n=6
    - UGA n=2
    - UGS n=9
  - c. Independent study
    - UFA n=1
    - UFS n=1
    - UGA n=0
    - UGS n=0
  - d. Other (including labs)
    - UFA n=0
    - UFS n=8
    - UGA n=2
    - UGS n=7
  - e. No knowledge
    - UFA n=0
    - UFS n=5
    - UGA n=0
    - UGS n=5

11. What types of alternative degree programs does the university offer (i.e., Bachelor's Degree in Independent Studies)?

a. No alternative degree offered

UFA n=5  
UFS n=2  
UGA n=2  
UGS n=5

b. Independent study/correspondence degree

UFA n=0  
UFS n=1  
UGA n=3  
UGS n=3

c. No knowledge

UFA n=0  
UFS n=17  
UGA n=0  
UGS n=10

12. Some theorists have suggested that a 1-hour lecture in a classroom is not the best way for everyone to learn new material. Can you describe any alternative teaching/learning experiences that are incorporated into the traditional curriculum for those students who have different learning styles (i.e., TV/radio, independent study, internships, etc.)? (Multiple responses reported.)

a. Traditional lecture or class discussion

UFA n=5  
UFS n=7  
UGA n=1  
UGS n=10

b. Television classes

UFA n=2  
UFS n=6  
UGA n=3  
UGS n=1

c. Field work/practical experience/studio

UFA n=1  
UFS n=5  
UGA n=1  
UGS n=6

d. Other

UFA n=0  
UFS n=5  
UGA n=4  
UGS n=8

- e. No knowledge
    - UFA n=0
    - UFS n=0
    - UGA n=0
    - UGS n=1
13. What types of academic programs at this university are specifically designed for reentry students?
- a. None
    - UFA n=1
    - UFS n=1
    - UGA n=2
    - UGS n=3
  - b. Continuing education program
    - UFA n=0
    - UFS n=0
    - UGA n=3
    - UGS n=1
  - c. No knowledge
    - UFA n=4
    - UFS n=19
    - UGA n=0
    - UGS n=14
14. What criteria are used for admission to this university? (Multiple responses reported.)
- a. Standardized test scores and past academic record
    - UFA n=5
    - UFS n=16
    - UGA n=4
    - UGS n=16
  - b. Other
    - UFA n=0
    - UFS n=5
    - UGA n=1
    - UGS n=0
  - c. No knowledge
    - UFA n=0
    - UFS n=2
    - UGA n=0
    - UGS n=2
15. In what ways does the university modify admission standards for special admission of reentry students?

- a. No modification
    - UFA n=3
    - UFS n=9
    - UGA n=1
    - UGS n=8
  - b. Petition process
    - UFA n=1
    - UFS n=4
    - UGA n=1
    - UGS n=2
  - c. Night school program
    - UFA n=0
    - UFS n=0
    - UGA n=2
    - UGS n=0
  - d. No knowledge
    - UFA n=1
    - UFS n=7
    - UGA n=1
    - UGS n=8
16. Describe any process the university uses to award credit for prior learning. (Multiple responses reported.)
- a. CLEP and/or advanced placement
    - UFA n=3
    - UFS n=5
    - UGA n=1
    - UGS n=5
  - b. Transfer credit
    - UFA n=3
    - UFS n=3
    - UGA n=1
    - UGS n=0
  - c. Challenge examination for course
    - UFA n=0
    - UFS n=1
    - UGA n=1
    - UGS n=7
  - d. Other
    - UFA n=0
    - UFS n=2
    - UGA n=0
    - UGS n=4

- e. None
    - UFA n=1
    - UFS n=2
    - UGA n=1
    - UGS n=1
  - f. No knowledge
    - UFA n=0
    - UFS n=8
    - UGA n=1
    - UGS n=6
17. There are certain issues that concern reentry students apart from traditional age students. How would you describe the level of understanding of these differences, by the faculty and staff at this institution?
- a. Aware of differences
    - UFA n=1
    - UFS n=5
    - UGA n=3
    - UGS n=9
  - b. Not aware of differences
    - UFA n=4
    - UFS n=7
    - UGA n=1
    - UGS n=4
  - c. Individuals are aware of differences
    - UFA n=0
    - UFS n=5
    - UGA n=1
    - UGS n=5
  - d. Other
    - UFA n=0
    - UFS n=3
    - UGA n=0
    - UGS n=0
18. We have been discussing academic programs up to this point. Now focusing on those programs and services that are not directly related to the academic curriculum, what other types of programs are being offered at your institution to serve reentry students as a unique population? (Multiple responses reported.)
- a. A staff member assigned to serve reentry students
    - UFA n=2
    - UFS n=0
    - UGA n=0
    - UGS n=0

- b. Social organization for reentry students
    - UFA n=3
    - UFS n=5
    - UGA n=1
    - UGS n=7
  - c. Other
    - UFA n=1
    - UFS n=4
    - UGA n=1
    - UGS n=2
  - d. None
    - UFA n=0
    - UFS n=1
    - UGA n=1
    - UGS n=2
  - e. No knowledge
    - UFA n=1
    - UFS n=10
    - UGA n=2
    - UGS n=7
19. Continuing from the last question, what types of programs and services are presently offered to the general student population that also serve reentry students? (Multiple responses reported.)
- a. All services offered by the university
    - UFA n=4
    - UFS n=5
    - UGA n=3
    - UGS n=11
  - b. Academic advising and counseling
    - UFA n=0
    - UFS n=6
    - UGA n=0
    - UGS n=3
  - c. Other
    - UFA n=2
    - UFS n=5
    - UGA n=0
    - UGS n=3
  - d. No knowledge
    - UFA n=0
    - UFS n=7
    - UGA n=2
    - UGS n=2

20. What types of programs or services, specifically designated for reentry students, would you like to see offered at your institution? (Multiple responses reported.)

a. Counseling/advising

UFA n=3  
UFS n=5  
UGA n=0  
UGS n=0

b. Orientation for reentry students

UFA n=1  
UFS n=3  
UGA n=2  
UGS n=4

c. More flexible schedule

UFA n=1  
UFS n=0  
UGA n=2  
UGS n=3

d. Social programs

UFA n=0  
UFS n=3  
UGA n=0  
UGS n=0

e. Day care

UFA n=0  
UFS n=1  
UGA n=2  
UGS n=5

f. Financial aid

UFA n=0  
UFS n=2  
UGA n=1  
UGS n=0

g. Other

UFA n=2  
UFS n=7  
UGA n=1  
UGS n=4

h. None

UFA n=0  
UFS n=2  
UGA n=0  
UGS n=2

- i. No knowledge
  - UFA n=2
  - UFS n=3
  - UGA n=1
  - UGS n=4
- 21. Are reentry students integrated into the classroom with the institution's traditional student population or do they attend classes specifically for them?
  - a. Integrated with traditional student population
    - UFA n=5
    - UFS n=20
    - UGA n=5
    - UGS n=18
- 22. Earlier you commented on this institution's relationship to reentry students. How would you describe the relationship of this institution to students in general?
  - a. Positive
    - UFA n=2
    - UFS n=4
    - UGA n=1
    - UGS n=11
  - b. Negative
    - UFA n=2
    - UFS n=12
    - UGA n=0
    - UGS n=4
  - c. Other
    - UFA n=1
    - UFS n=4
    - UGA n=4
    - UGS n=3
- 23. What changes could be made at this institution to improve the educational experience of its reentry students? (Multiple responses reported.)
  - a. Sensitize faculty to reentry students
    - UFA n=1
    - UFS n=4
    - UGA n=2
    - UGS n=0
  - b. Provide more personal contact
    - UFA n=1
    - UFS n=3
    - UGA n=1
    - UGS n=1

- c. Orientation for reentry students
  - UFA n=1
  - UFS n=4
  - UGA n=2
  - UGS n=2
- d. Improved advisors for reentry students
  - UFA n=1
  - UFS n=2
  - UGA n=0
  - UGS n=2
- e. Flexible schedule
  - UFA n=0
  - UFS n=3
  - UGA n=1
  - UGS n=3
- f. Financial aid
  - UFA n=0
  - UFS n=1
  - UGA n=1
  - UGS n=3
- g. Credit for experiential learning
  - UFA n=0
  - UFS n=1
  - UGA n=0
  - UGS n=2
- h. Special considerations for reentry students
  - UFA n=0
  - UFS n=6
  - UGA n=0
  - UGS n=2
- i. None
  - UFA n=1
  - UFS n=5
  - UGA n=1
  - UGS n=7
- j. Other
  - UFA n=0
  - UFS n=1
  - UGA n=2
  - UGS n=3

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#### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Michael Rollo was born on January 29, 1951, in Louisville, Georgia. He lived throughout the United States as the son of a noncommissioned officer in the United States Air Force. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Education, with a major in secondary education, from the University of Florida in 1975. Entering graduate school immediately upon graduation, he received his Specialist in Education and Master of Education in counselor education, also from the University of Florida, in 1978. While attending graduate school he was self-employed as a musician and spent one year as a counselor at a runaway shelter followed by a year as a counselor at a maximum security mental hospital for criminal sex offenders.

Upon receiving his Ed.S., he was employed for one year as a residence hall director at the Ohio State University. He returned to Gainesville in 1979 and has been employed by the University of Florida since the fall of that year. He continues to reside in Gainesville, Florida, with his wife Amy, an elementary school teacher, and their two daughters: Rebecca and Rachel. Presently, he holds the position of Assistant Dean for Student Services and Director of Student Judicial Affairs at the University of Florida.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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